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ARGOSY

STORIES BY

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RAY BRADBURY

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

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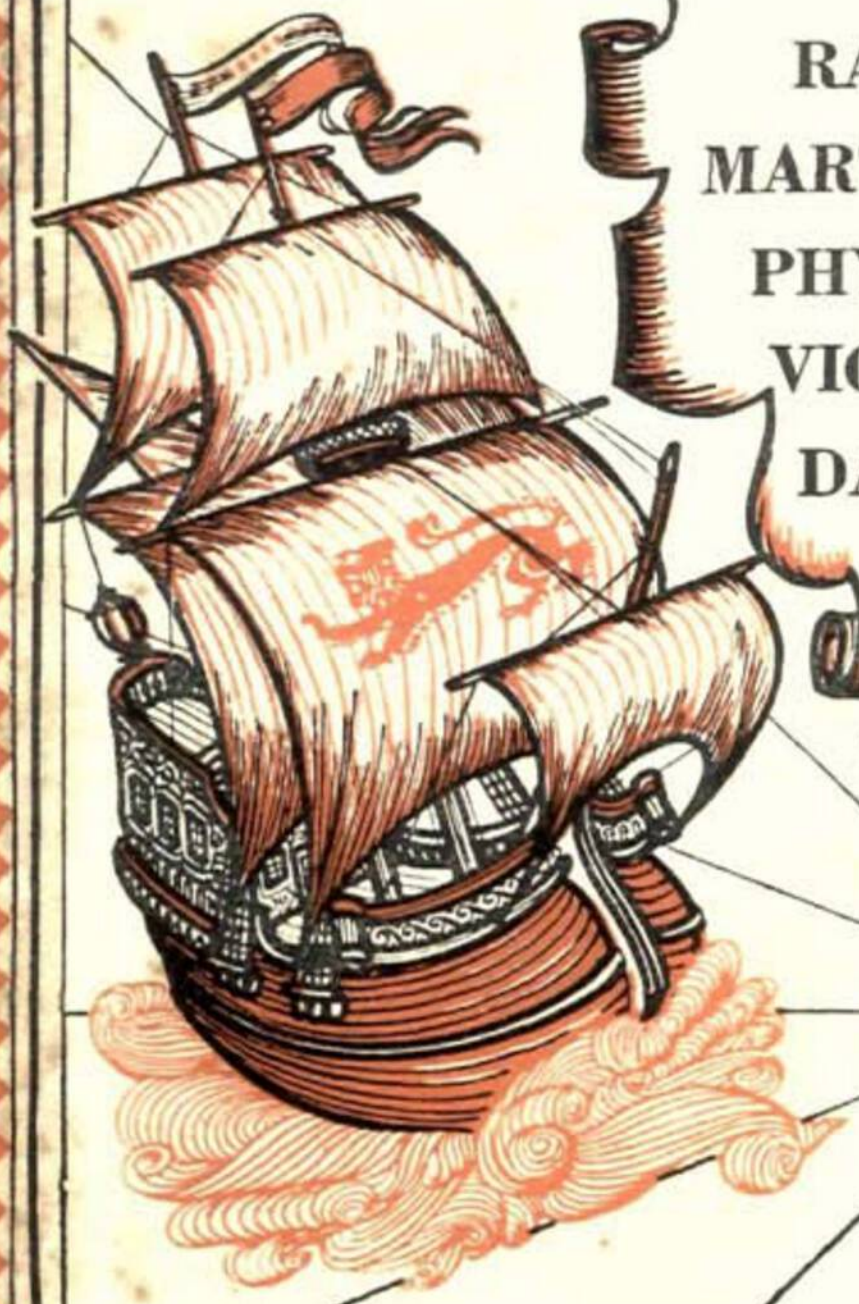
VICTOR CANNING

DAVID WALKER

AND OTHERS



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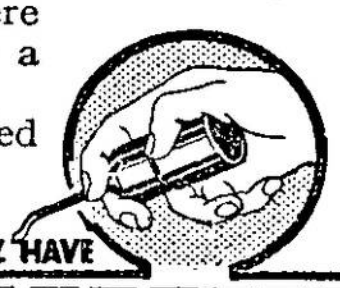

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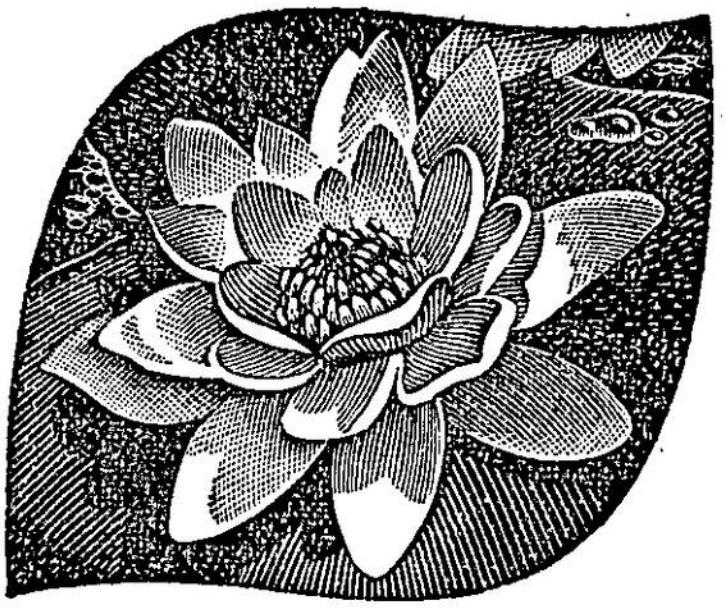

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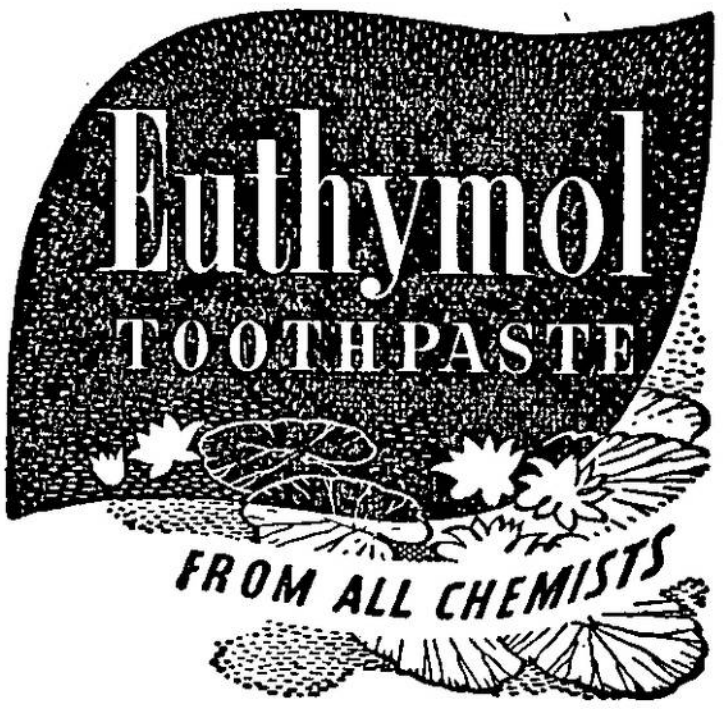

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ARGOSY

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Song for November

I LOVE to see when leaves depart,
The clear anatomy arrive,
Winter, the paragon of art,
That kills all forms of life and feeling
Save what is pure and will survive.

Already now the clanging chains
Of geese are harnessed to the moon:
Stripped are the great sun-clouding planes:
And the dark pines, their own revealing,
Let in the needles of the noon.

Strained by the gale the olives whiten
Like hoary wrestlers bent with toil
And, with the vines, their branches lighten
To brim our vats where summer lingers
In the red froth and sun-gold oil.

Soon on our hearth's reviving pyre
Their rotted stems will crumble up:
And like a ruby, panting fire,
The grape will redden on your fingers
Through the lit crystal of the cup.

ROY CAMPBELL

ACROSS THE LAKE

There was something about the man that eluded them — what was it that he lacked?

by RUTH HARNDEN

ONE half of the wooded lake was peppered with summer cottages close enough to the shore so that after dark their lights made wavering paths on the water and the sounds of talking, singing, and sometimes the music from a radio floated almost to the opposite shore. The opposite shore was dark except for a single, rather high light among the trees. When any of the cottagers came down for a week-end out of season, no matter what time of year it was, they could always see that single light showing across the water, lonely and steadfast as a solitary vigil.

During the daytime there was no sight of a house on that shore, but a small, wooden pier, extending from the land, was visible, and attached to it there was usually a green-painted dory riding loosely at the end of a rope. Occasionally the single occupant of the house would come down to the pier to wash his clothes or to take his family of cats out in the dory. He washed his clothes after the fashion of Italian women, by beating them against the boards of the pier, and the wet, slapping sounds carried out over the lake. About once a month he washed his cats by rowing them all out a short distance from the shore and putting them overboard to make their own way back.

Even without these practices it would have been apparent to any person of sense that he was an exceptionally clean man within his untidiness. His pants, hanging slack on his thin frame from a pair of braces, were always spotted with paint and never pressed, but they were unmistakably clean. He wore, invariably, a collarless white shirt from which at least one button was missing and which had not been ironed. But it, too, was clean, and about him was always the faint, fresh smell of lake water.

As the summer wore on each year there would come suddenly some crisp evening the rhythmic sound of a water pump from across the lake. Hearing it, the cottagers would look at one another and say the single word, "frost." Behind the word was their realization of the summer's end, the arrival of autumn, the threat of winter. It had become for them a mournful and challenging word that could stand alone. And it was evoked each year by the

sound of Jed's pump drawing water to flood his cranberry bogs against freezing.

The bogs lay on the level ground at the back of his house, and were his livelihood. In bad years they failed him, and then he would cross the lake to do jobs for the summer people. There was no practical skill he hadn't acquired in his solitary, self-sufficient existence, from carpentry and plumbing to gardening and even cooking. If he needed work, he came and asked for it, did it, took his wages in hand and departed. He was uncommunicative at these times. But not infrequently, in good seasons or bad, he came for a social visit, and then he was voluble.

He talked mostly of what he had been reading or perhaps of what he had seen at the cinema. It was three miles into town and he possessed only a bicycle, but he went in with changeless regularity three times a week. He went for the afternoon performance on the days when the feature changed. After the picture, he took two books back to the public library and selected two more.

The amount and variety of the reading he had done was a source of considerable admiration. It was the source of some secret amusement as well, since he had got nearly everything he knew through his eyes, rather than through his ears, and his pronunciations were completely original.

None of the cottagers ever knew when he might come for one of his calls. They would simply hear his rowlocks across the water, hear his boat scraping their pier, and presently he would stride into the house, carrying perhaps a box of blueberries, or bringing a few eggs out of his pockets to put on their table. In this way they would know that he had come not in need of work, but for companionship.

He visited most often at the Altons', although no one knew whether this was the expression of anything deeper than his taste in tea. A number of the other cottagers had reported that he invariably drank their tea with the succinct observation, "I like Miz Alton's tea." In most respects, his manners were unconventional, but this was laid to the singularity of his life and was received without offence. In the same way certain deeper oddities, or omissions, in his nature were taken for granted and had never been analyzed.

He was sitting in the Altons' living room one evening early in the summer when he made a wholly uncharacteristic remark. He had finished relating the story of the film he had seen that afternoon, and in the lull that followed his narrative, had let his eyes wander to a picture which occupied the wall space above the mantel. It was the picture of an Indian wearing a fringed loincloth and squatting before a fire.

"That woman would make me a good wife," Jed said thoughtfully.

Mrs. Alton looked up from her darning and smiled.

"That isn't a squaw, Jed," she pointed out, concealing her surprise. "That's a man."

Jed's gaze remained on the picture. He said nothing. Mrs. Alton studied his absorbed, ruminative face as though she had never really seen it before. What was it that he lacked? He had a gaunt, proud sort of homeliness, and the kind of detachment that is usually seen only in the faces of children or in those of the very old. Above his craggy cheekbones and high forehead, his hair rose in a wavy crest that was just beginning to grey. He might be forty.

So far as anyone knew, he had never looked at a woman in his life. Certainly no one, heretofore, had ever heard him speak of one in relation to himself. Except for his sporadic sociability among the summer people, he lived a hermit's life. He had never been heard to swear or to utter an obscenity. His conversation at all times had the innocence of a well-bred girl's. It struck Mrs. Alton at this moment that, for all she had ever known to the contrary, Jed might never have observed that God had created them male and female. It might have entirely escaped his notice, for any sign he had ever given. Yet, strangely, it was some other absence in him that was troubling her mind elusively.

She caught her husband's eye, saw that he was equally surprised, and they sat for a number of minutes in silence. At the end of that time, Jed got up, bade them good night, and walked out. They heard the pier creak under his step, heard the wooden rattle of oars, and then the measured noise of his rowlocks as he pulled his way back across the lake.

A few weeks later, the Altons were taking a sunset row when, passing Jed's pier, they were arrested by the sound of music drifting down to them from the house in the trees. It was no music, and seemingly no instrument, that they had ever heard anywhere before. Mr. Alton rested on his oars while they both listened.

When the music paused, Mrs. Alton called, "Jed," her voice carrying clearly across the still water, "is that you? What are you playing?"

There was a silence and then Jed's familiar, deep voice answered. "Got a hankering to make some music," he called down. "Got me a harmoniky." And he began to play it again.

"I'll be damned," Mr. Alton whispered. "If that's a harmonica, he's a genius."

"But what is it he's playing?" his wife whispered back.

She could believe anything of the instrument, but where on earth had he got the notes? Ravel? Debussy? She rejected every name that presented itself. She thought of Chinese music. She thought of certain American Indian tribes because she had heard that they had a scale of their own.

Facing one another in the dory, their heads lifted to listen, they let themselves drift imperceptibly until Mrs. Alton in the stern had overtaken the pools that dripped from Mr. Alton's oars. When the unaccountable melody came to an end, they looked at one another again. There was on both their faces an uncomprehending inquiry, like people searching their memories for something lost beyond reach.

The boat had drifted into the shadows of the bushes that hung over the water, and now an early bat started from the leaves and circled blindly in the setting sun. Mr. Alton pulled at the oars while Mrs. Alton clutched her head, trying to cover it with both her hands. As they moved rapidly towards the centre of the lake, the harmonica began again. But now it was playing the commonplace, familiar refrain of a popular song, anti-climactic and oddly relieving. Mr. Alton began to hum the tune while they smiled a little foolishly at one another.

In another minute they had started to laugh. They laughed helplessly; not as though there were anything to amuse them, but as though they needed to laugh because it was a long time since they had been permitted to do so.

They understood the incident too little ever to speak of it, but they retained in their thoughts of Jed a new strangeness, a half-conscious readiness for they knew not what, something surprising and beyond comprehension.

It was a month later, perhaps more, before they saw him again. Then he rowed across the lake at noontime one day and walked in on their lunch. He was wearing a suit jacket over his collarless shirt, and a cap on the back of his head that looked so unnatural that it might have been some wholly unsuitable object that had fallen on him unawares as he passed beneath it.

"Walkin' to town," he told, standing beside the table. Mrs. Alton started to offer him lunch, wondered if perhaps he was hinting at a lift in their car, and ended by simply waiting because he was so plainly waiting himself, not for anything they might have to say, but for something he was trying to say himself.

There was none of the customary detachment in his face now, but rather an intent, shy look. He reminded Mrs. Alton of a boy in his first party clothes, asking not to be admired but to be ignored. The Altons continued to eat.

"Got me a wife," Jed said, and stopped again. They both looked up. They both began a number of sentences they didn't finish, congratulatory, inquiring, uncertain.

"Goin' to fetch her," Jed said, as though nobody else had spoken and he was simply bringing up in his own time the information he had to impart. Mrs. Alton thought of asking if they were both going to walk back and what he would do if she had any luggage, but Jed was speaking again.

"Never seen her," he said. "Advertised for her."

Nothing like this had ever entered the Altons' experience before and neither of them knew quite how to receive it. Mrs. Alton was the first to recover. Watching his prominent Adam's apple moving soundlessly in his throat, she managed, "Well, I hope you're going to like her, Jed." She felt the inadequacy of her words, but she was unprepared for the look of mild, reproving surprise that he turned upon her.

"I aim to love her," he said simply. After a minute his eyes moved to another focus and when he spoke she knew that he was talking to himself. "Either you got love in you, or you ain't."

Mr. Alton laughed a little uncertainly. "You're a philosopher, Jed," he told him, "but what about her?" He paid no attention to his wife's nervous, silencing motions. "How do you know she's got it in her?"

Jed's eyes turned to him. "What's she comin' for, then?" he inquired with the satisfaction of evident logic.

"Might be just looking for a home," Mr. Alton suggested against his wife's obvious agitation. After all, Mrs. Alton thought, it's done. She's on the way. What's the use of planting doubts in his mind now?

But Jed only continued to regard Mr. Alton with unwavering patience.

"It's the same thing," he said, and Mrs. Alton relaxed. "Goin' along now," he said after another pause. They got up from the table, they shook his hand, they made appropriate, if vague, remarks, because of course he had come for reassurance. For all his fundamental calm, he had some immediate schoolboy fright that he wouldn't put into words if he could, but that had made him come to stand beside their luncheon table, to bring forth his shy information, piece by piece.

"My God!" Mr. Alton said, sitting down again and resuming his interrupted meal. "Do you suppose she's got any idea . . ." he began, thinking about Jed's life, his cats, his bicycle, the winters here at the lake, the years the cranberries failed, and groping for something else about Jed that still eluded him.

"Do you suppose *she's* got any idea," his wife repeated with

indignant emphasis. " What about *him?* I just hope she's good enough for him! I just hope she isn't some outlandish tramp! After all," she began on a new breath, and against a growing sense of confusion, " he's the *cleanest* man! And think of the things he's read! And then his music . . ."

They talked about it most of the afternoon, each one thinking of something the other had overlooked, but neither of them at any time ever touching on the thing that escaped them both. Two or three times they laughed briefly, like guilty children who must quickly return to propriety, but mostly their conversation was earnest, practical, and deeply concerned.

Mrs. Alton had begun to prepare for supper when her husband came into the kitchen in unaccustomed haste.

" They're here," he told her in a hoarse whisper. " Just coming along the road." She followed him hastily to the front of the house and they stood by the windows in such a way that they couldn't easily be seen from outside. Actually, they needn't have taken any pains to conceal themselves from the pair who, now descending the path to the lake, were clearly quite oblivious of their existence.

Either Jed had removed his cap or it had been brushed from his head as heedlessly as it had seemed, in the first place, to have landed there, for he was no longer wearing it. In either hand he carried an enormous, shabby suitcase spattered with worn labels. Beside him walked a stout, untidily dressed woman whose spike-heeled shoes plainly hurt her feet. Their backs were toward the Altons' house, and this was all of her that the Altons could observe except for her uncovered head of coarse bleached hair.

" My God! " Mr. Alton kept repeating as though they were the only words left in the world. Mrs. Alton said nothing. The woman looked like her worst fears.

They watched while Jed reached out a foot and drew his swinging dory alongside their pier. Holding the boat steady with his foot, he dropped the suitcases into the bow and then put out a hand to help the woman to the seat in the stern. His dory, Mrs. Alton noted for the first time, had recently been given a fresh coat of paint. Now the woman had turned towards the house, but at this distance her face was little more than a large, sun-reddened blur. As soon as she was seated she opened a garish, plaid umbrella and appeared to relax.

" Well," Mrs. Alton said, making a determined clutch at the only straw of suitability that seemed available, " she *did* walk from town. And in those shoes! "

They watched Jed unfasten the rope, step into the rowing seat and pick up his oars. As he swung the boat round so that he was

now facing the shore himself, they drew back from the window. There was little more to be observed.

Mrs. Alton completed her preparations for supper and they ate in comparative silence. Neither of them quite knew whether to be relieved or disappointed that Jed hadn't brought his wife in.

"Actually," Mrs. Alton said, later that evening, "I suppose it's up to us to call."

They let a week elapse. During the second week, various rumours had begun to go the round of the cottagers. People had seen her on the pier, although their descriptions varied so widely that the Altons credited none of them. The children's descriptions were more consistent, though not very informative. Most of them had seen her, and a few of them even claimed to have talked with her. One of them said she had been an actress, and another insisted that she had been with a circus. They were all in agreement that she was "funny," and with the bland simplification of childhood, they refused to elaborate. She simply was funny, and anyone knew what *that* was.

At the end of the second week, the Altons decided to call. It was generally conceded by the other cottagers to be up to them since they had always been the most frequent objects of Jed's sociability. The prospect, however, even after two weeks of deliberation, filled them with such a welter of emotions that it left them, at the last, quite silent.

They had chosen a brilliant evening with the lake as still as glass and the promise of a moon for their return. Mr. Alton rowed slowly, following the uneven shoreline, and they spoke of the sunset, of some flowering shrub that was late this year, of a house that needed paint and a pier that was out of repair, quite as though they had no object in mind other than the enjoyment of an evening on the water.

Half way round to Jed's pier, they began to hear the sound of a woman's voice singing. She sang in a nasal, unpleasing voice—but with an evident ear for melody. When she stopped, Jed repeated the air on his harmonica. Then she sang another tune and he played that. He had a quick ear and it was plain that she was teaching him the songs she knew. It all had an amiable, domestic sound, and the Altons began to feel disarmed.

A few yards from Jed's pier, Mr. Alton took his exact bearings, adjusted his stroke, and prepared to slide quietly to mooring. They could hear the woman talking now, without being able to catch her words. All at once Mr. Alton's hands were motionless on the oars, and his wife started in her seat. They were listening to a sound that had never before struck their ears. Deep, resonant

and unrestrained, it rolled down from the house and echoed out over the water.

They looked at one another, and the expression on their faces was identical. It was a look of nothing less than revelation. The thing about Jed which had always eluded them, for which they had been groping as long as they'd known him, which they had been aware of so tenuously as to be unable even to put it into words, was revealed to them at this moment.

This was the first time they had ever heard Jed laugh.

* * *

RELATIVELY SPEAKING

In quite a literal sense, for these characters are all fictional relations. Count one point for identifying the relative, one for the source and one for the author, making 24 points in all. **Solution on page 143.**

1. *A formidable old lady, especially where donkeys and donkey-boys were concerned, but she provided a haven of refuge for her runaway great-nephew.*
2. *Twenty years old, a lusty bachelor with a colourful taste in dress, but none the less a dutiful son to the eminent father with whom he was travelling.*
3. *Mislaid as an infant by an absent-minded governess, this young man found himself without family or pedigree. How great his joy to discover that he was not only the brother of a great friend, but also the possessor of a much admired name!*
4. *Despite his great physical strength, he had a gentle nature; but his dependence on a treacherous elder brother led to his drowning the girl he loved.*
5. *She lavished lavender water and red flannel on her adored nephew, and when a calamity ended his Channel swim, she regaled him with a* very *mixed grill!*
6. *No wonder his mother was anxious to learn where he had dined, for this handsome young man came home in great discomfort expressing the wish to be put to bed!*
7. *"So young, and so untender?" But she proved the kindest daughter in the family.*
8. *Himself a man of substance, and the father of a man of property, his constant complaint was that nobody told him anything.*

FIGHTING COCKEREL

"It isn't doin' the deed that makes a man guilty," says Barney, "it's decidin' to do it"

by VICTOR CANNING

I MIND the day I first went as a lodger in Barney Doran's house. I wasn't more than a stripling, though I was big for my age and, in those days, I felt I had the world by the tail and was twisting it hard.

Barney looks at me and he says, " It's a dirty, unwholesome job ye've got workin' on a newspaper, but I'll take ye in—for your morals will not have been corrupted yet. What'll ye go stripped ? About a hundred and thirty pounds, devil a bit more or I'm no judge ? "

I might have been a bit puzzled if the lads at the paper had not told me about the old man. In a life which had been full of its fair share of devilry, excitement and decent hard work—though Barney never professed any overdue liking for this last—the old man had been a boxer. And a good one, too, though he was now past it by about twenty years.

" You're right there," I says, " a hundred and twenty-eight."

" Sure, and wasn't I the same at your age."

He looks at me hard and for the moment there was no twinkle at the back of his hard blue eyes. " Do ye think we was fair beat at the Boyne ? "

Barney was no Orangeman, and that again was one of the reasons they'd sent me along to him. " You needn't worry over the colours I'll wear on the Twelfth of July," I says, and with that the interviewing was done and Barney set me down with a glass on a chair outside the window and we sat and talked and he told me a lot about himself. A rare, fine talker he was, with just enough imagination to keep a story going without giving anyone cause to name him a liar. Then, just as we were thinking of going in, he says,

" It's an important question I'll ask ye now, so you'll not be saying Barney Doran had ye here under false pretences. Are ye a good sleeper ? "

" I never had any trouble," I says.

" Then ye're a lucky man," says Barney, " and I'm hopin' your luck keeps runnin'. I sleep bad meself. Not a decent night's sleep I've known in a long time."

" And why would that be ? " I asks him.

" Come with me and I'll show ye the cause av it all," he says, and with that he rises and we go to the bottom of the garden. On the other side of the fence was a strip of land used as a fowl-yard which belonged to Barney's neighbour, Michael Taafe. In the yard were a few white hens and, sitting on top of a box, as fine a cockerel as ever I'd seen.

" There he is," says Barney. " Yon brawlin' braggart murders me sleep ivery mornin'."

Just then the bird begins to crow. It was the evening performance and never did I hear such a noise. The creature seemed fair demented with pride and vigour. It threw back its head and crowed and crowed until it was a wonder it didn't break a blood vessel. Man, it was so fantastic I had to laugh. Sure, and at the same time I couldn't help admiring the bird. It was one of the most beautiful I'd ever seen, with a tawny mantle that fell from its shoulders in a rich, warm gold ; its tail feathers had the arch and sweep of an emperor's plumes, green and blue and afire with sheen, and the red of its wattles and the yellow of its legs were as bright as new paint.

" It's a useless devil," says Barney. " You'll hear him at five ivery mornin', tellin' the world what a fine fellow he is. Would ye credit now that such a small body could give out that amount av noise, and all for the admiration of its own useless self ? One mornin' I'll take me gun to it, and that'll be the end ! "

As Barney was saying this, there comes down to the bottom of the next garden his neighbour, Michael Taafe. Taafe was as old as Barney, but taller, wirier and with not enough meat on his bones to keep his clothes company.

" If iver ye harm that bird, Barney Doran," he says, " I'll have the law on ye."

" Will ye then ? " answers Barney. " Maybe ye think ither people is as scared of the law as ye've reason to be ? "

They passed a few compliments to one another, and if it hadn't been for Taaffe's wife calling to him to come in for supper I'd not have been surprised to see them over the fence at one another.

Later, I learned that Barney and Taafe had been on similar terms for many years. Apart from their political persuasions which, of course, made the whole thing reasonable and entirely natural—Barney being a Nationalist and Taafe an Orangeman—there was also the matter of a small piece of land which Barney owned that lay over the other side of a small stream which bordered Taafe's fowl-yard. Taafe wanted to buy the land and Barney had no intention of selling it at any price, though devil a use did he put the land to himself.

" You should make a complaint to the police," I says one day

after I'd been there for some time, for I could see that with an old man like Barney the loss of his sleep was doing him no good.

" I'll make no complaint," says Barney. " But one mornin' that bird will go too far and I'll take me gun to it."

He was always saying he would shoot the bird, but I knew he never would. He was at heart a good-natured man, not the kind to blow an innocent bird into eternity. But each morning, when the cockerel would begin his blathering, Barney would turn in his bed in the room next to mine and there would be a muttering, and then the window would go up with a bang and Barney would lean out in his nightshirt and curse it with a fluency which was an education in itself to a young man like myself just entering the newspaper trade.

Then, after I'd been there about three months, the whole thing came to a head. One morning in July the bird woke me with its crowing and I heard the bang of Barney's window.

" Hush your bawlin', ye painted heathen ! " he shouts. " Do ye want me to come and silence ye ? "

But the bird only answers him with a clamour fit to wake the dead.

" Ye roarin' braggart—" shouts Barney, " —have ye no respect or decency in your carcase ? "

The bird let fly another screech that set the echoes ringing between the houses and I heard Barney shout some more. Then his window went down with a bang the way it was a wonder the glass stood up to it. After a bit I thought I heard Barney downstairs. I lay listening, wondering what the old man was up to. Suddenly there was an awful rattle of echoes against the house as someone fired a shotgun.

Even as I jumped out of bed I said to myself, " Barney, you've done the wrong thing." When I looked out of the window there was Barney at the bottom of the garden, just climbing over the fence into the fowl-yard, and in his hand he carried a smoking shot gun. I pulled on some clothes and ran down. I got into the fowl-yard just as Michael Taaffe came tearing through, angry and half-asleep, with his nightshirt tucked into his trousers and his braces trailing behind him like a forked tail.

Barney was standing in the yard holding the shotgun in the crook of his arm, and he had the cockerel held against his breast with his free hand. The bird seemed half-dead, with its eyes lidding over, and the blood was coming from a bad wound in its neck.

" Ye murderin' villain ! " screams Michael Taafe. " You shot me bird ! I'll have the law on ye for this ! You dirty assassin—I've a mind to teach you some decent behaviour meself ! "

" Hold your noise, you stupid ould woman," says Barney.

" T'was you was the instigator av the whole trouble. Do ye want to provoke me ? "

Taafe's braces flopped about in the dust as he danced up and down. " You needn't think you'll come out av this so aisily . . . Give me the bird ! "

" Ye'll not get the bird," says Barney. " If any bird deserved to be shot this one did. If ye're takin' the law av me," says Barney, " ye'll no doubt get your damages. Meantime I'm keepin' the bird, and if you try and take him from me I'll wipe your eye for you and be obliged to wash me hands after . . ."

Although Barney was fairly calm against Taafe's rage, I'll not say he was being exactly conciliatory, and there was a fair gathering of neighbours around by now, some of them in their nightshirts and some in more decent modes of dress, but all taking a great personal interest in the affair. There were those who felt like Barney —the bird had been a plague to them. But there were others who were for Taafe, because as is natural a man must follow his political feelings regardless of the right or wrong of his cause.

When Barney offered to wipe Taafe's eye, Taafe—with no lack of spirit—says, " And I'd like to see the man who could now. It'll certainly not be you on this day."

And that did it, of course, for we all suddenly remembered what the day was. Sure, it was the twelfth of July, and even without the bird it would have been fair reason for the larrikins that ensued.

Barney dropped the bird and the gun and went into Taafe like a mole tunnelling a potato patch, and when a neighbour—it was Con McGra—tried to part them he got a swipe on the head from Taafe that knocked him into the chicken hut. Seeing that Barney had McGra with him, it was the proper duty of Big Pete Armstrong to join in to make things even for Taafe. And when Big Pete was in, Danny the Pump joins in for Barney. After a little while, what with one joining in and then another, and no chance of ever getting the odds evened up, it was each man for himself and an occasional woman hanging about the outskirts to bang you over the head with a bat of wood or a garden paling just to keep you in the fight in case you had a mind to up and sneak away before the thing was properly settled—which, in fairness to both sides, I must say was an idea that never once crossed the minds of any of us.

The only complaint I heard afterwards was that the rising dust from the bare earth made it hard to settle who was for or against you, so that there were quite a few that found themselves pitched into the small brook at the edge of the yard by good friends who would never have raised a hand against them if they could have seen properly.

I finished in the brook, but I had the satisfaction of sending

one or two there first to establish its fitness for myself, and both Barney and Taafe came in with me. It was while we were getting our wind and thinking of coming out that Father Gorrian arrives and stops the fight. He said some hard words, and there was no arguing with him for his judgment was that on the civil side Barney was in the wrong, though on the religious side he was in the right since a man has a duty to fight for his religion. But that is as it may be. Barney and I went back to the house, and Barney took the bird and his gun with him.

Taafe went back to his house and that day started legal proceedings against Barney for the loss of the bird and also for assault and battery.

" I should av kept me temper, both wi' the bird and wi' Taafe," says Barney inside the house. " Not that I regret anything. No, t'was as decent a fight, considerin' the day, as a man could ask for."

With that he starts to fuss over the bird. He spent a great deal of time for the next two days over the cockerel, and gradually he got him back to health. It was a miracle of patience how he did it, but done it was, and it seemed to me he wanted to do it as a sort of recompense, for it was not like Barney to shoot at a defenceless bird in that way.

Taafe, of course, brought a charge and the affair became the talk of the town. You see, it wasn't only a question of the bird. It was a question of one faction against another, and when Barney was brought up before the magistrates the place was crowded and Major Dundas had to threaten to clear the place unless people behaved themselves . . . He was a good man, the major, and although of the same political persuasion as Barney he indulged in no prejudice which any man, in the circumstances, could call unreasonable.

" Ye've heard all the evidence, Barney," he says, " and while I'm not taking into account the political differences involved, for this is no place for them, I'm a little surprised at you. If it had been anyone else but a good Irishman like yourself," and with that he gives a glance towards that part of the court which was packed with Michael Taafe's men, " I could have understood it. But ye're not the kind of man to take a shot at a sitting bird. Why on earth did ye not come and make a complaint in the proper way ? "

" Well, your honour," says Barney, " he was disturbin' me sleep and I could stand it no longer. Your honour knows, 'tis a patient man I am, and for months I've stood the yammerin' av that orange-backed, crowin' Billy—"

" Just refer to it as the bird," says the Major with a pleased twist to his face. " There's some in this court would think your

reference of ' crowin' Billy ' had something to do with the good King William whose memory is evergreen in our loyal hearts."

" Sure, your honour," says Barney. " Well, I'd sworn I'd not be forced to law by this . . . creature. But that mornin' me temper took the upper hand of me. It's sleep that is a precious thing when ye've reached my age, your honour—as I'm prayin' ye'll live long enough to know for yourself one of these days."

" You shouldn't have shot him, Barney," says the Major. " Ye did wrong."

" I'm not denyin' it," says Barney. " Live and let live. But there it is, your honour. As for the fight afterwards, well—as Father Gorrian has said—there was provocation on both sides, and maybe a deal more on one than the ither—"

" Quite, quite," says the Major, and then after a bit more talk the upshot was that Barney was fined five pounds damages which he paid into the court there and then.

When he came out I was with him, and Michael Taafe comes up.

" Barney Doran," he says, " I'd like me bird back. I understand he's in your house and well recovered."

But Barney shakes his head. " Ye've had your five pounds, Taafe. I'm keepin' the bird," and then he added, sounding a bit embarrassed, " —and if ye don't think that's fair enough, I'll let ye buy that piece of land ye've wanted all along."

So Barney kept the cock and sold his land. He kept the bird in a little run he made in the garden and fetched it a couple of hens for company, but it never crowed again. The injury to its neck had finished its crowing, and all it could do was to give a few clucks now and again. Barney used to sit on a chair watching it. It was very strange how attached he was to the creature now.

Then one day he says, " Ye're wonderin' why I'm so fond av that bird ? Ye can't understand it, can ye ? "

" Well," says I, " it's just that I can't put the two things comfortably together—you, shooting the bird, and then being so affectionate towards it."

" Faith," says Barney, " seein' that it's real fond av ye I am, I'll tell ye now. But if iver ye breathe a word of it to anyone in this town, I'll wipe your eye for ye."

" I'll not risk that," I says. " What is it now ? "

" Well," says Barney, " I was after the blood av that cockerel that mornin'. 'Tis that what counts. I meant murder. That's why I never denied it to the Major—for ye must know that it isn't doin' the deed that makes a man guilty, it's decidin' to do it.

" No, I went down to the empty braggart that mornin' to kill him, but when I got there the crowin' had stopped—and for good

reason. There was a weasel in the yard, a long, slim devil of a beast come in after the young birds. There they was, all cooped-up in a corner like frightened women folk, and our friend here was havin' a rare set-to with the weasel. Man, he showed me then he wasn't any empty braggart and me heart warmed to him. There he was, jumpin' and leapin', and them wicked spurs going right, left, right, left, as neat and clever as any boxer. But the weasel was no fool, either. He got on to the bird's neck and drew blood bad, but the cockerel threw him off and kept going for his eyes.

" That ould bird knew how to fight, and there was me standin' there that had had him marked for an empty, crowin' rascal for months. Man, the way that bird fought, he had a right to crow. In the end he had the weasel blinded and the beast ran round in circles trying to get out of the yard. That's when I fired. I didn't want the weasel to be away blinded, to die like a miserable sinner in a hole. I finished him wi' a shot and he fell into the brook yonder. Then you all came tearin' down on me . . ."

" But Barney," says I, " why did you not tell us ? "

" What was there to tell ye ? I meant to kill the bird. I would have done it but for that weasel, and then I would have had his blood on me hands. No, as one fighter to another, I was glad to pay the five pounds for him."

* * *

GLAD GALOPPË

" Come, my love, and let us stoppë
In our ancient jade jaloppë
At ye oldë mouldë shoppë :
Fine Antiques—to Sell or Swappë.
Out you hoppë, in we poppë."

" Lawsy, what a table toppë ! "
" Lazy Susan ? That's a coppë."
" Grant's old razor ! " " Where's the stroppë ? "
" Snuffbox . . . Pewter . . . London foppë."
" Flip glass." " Careful, now. Don't droppë ! "

" See that curious, *curious* moppë ! "
" Buggy whips—the old clip-cloppë
Days ! " " A pruning knife, to loppë ? "
" Burbank owned it." " Will you ploppë
Down five bucks for these sweet sloppë
Jars ? " " That's much too much—*de troppë !* "

DAVID MCCORD

HOW TO WOO

Don't Spare Expense . . .

Miss Bagnold . . . remained in Vienna over a month during which I persistently endeavoured to undermine her resistance by means of telegrams and letters, mandatory, she called them, not supplicating as a lover's !

At last I played my trump card. I telegraphed, *Reply Paid*, that I was sailing for America in a few weeks and should be away a long time ! Would she marry me first or not !

The laconic answer came back : " Yes."

SIR RODERICK JONES, *A Life in Reuters*

Serenade Her . . .

Who is it that, this dark night
Underneath my window plaineth ?
It is one who from thy sight
Being, ah, exiled, disdaineth
Every other vulgar light.

Why, alas, and are you he ?
Be not yet those fancies changèd ?
Dear, when you find change in me,
Though from me you be estrangèd,
Let my change to ruin be.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, 1554-1586

Tell Her You Love Her . . .

He turned to look at her, and she saw him then for the first time, not as an employer but as a human being—a man of medium height, stockily built, with a pleasant, humorous face, in which the eyes were notably blue and youthful. She thought in words, slowly and wonderingly : " He's asked me . . . to . . . marry him. Me ! "

" I would like very much to see the house," Thirza said, staring at the carpet. " But first I must tell you something, Mr. Skene. I have not thought a great deal about marriage, but there is one thing I have always been sure of. I could only marry for love."

" I see," Mr. Skene said, " I see." And he paused, plainly disconcerted, for a long moment. " And I presume that you could not come to have such a feeling for me ? "

" I don't know," she said, and there was just a touch of asperity in her voice. " But what is just as important is that you have not yet told me if you have such a feeling for me."

" I can assure you that I have such a feeling," Mr. Skene said.

She traced a pattern on the carpet with her toe, and then, becoming aware that not only her boot but also an inch of ankle was visible, she drew her foot modestly under the hem of her dress and sat still, thinking. " I would like to hear you say it," she said at last.

" Well," Mr. Skene said in a gruff, stubborn voice, " I love you, if that's what you want me to say." And, seeing a secret smile lift the corners of her mouth, he said, speaking naturally and urgently, " I love you very much, Thirza."

Smiling faintly, she raised her face to him. " It's not the same as it is in books, is it ? " she said.

NEIL PATERSON, *Behold Thy Daughter*

Quote Poetry . . .

O gin my love were yon red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa' !
And I mysell a drap of dew,
Into her bonny breast to fa' !

Oh, there beyond expression blest
I'd feast on beauty a' the night ;
Seal'd on her silk-saft falds to rest,
Till fleyed awa by Phoebus light.

Author Unknown

Sweep Her Off Her Feet . . .

" I could be happy in a shop," he said.
His sense of effect had made him pause.
" If I had the right company," he added.
She became very still . . .
He found himself plunging.
" I've got someone in my eye this minute," he said.
" Elfrid ! " she said, turning to him, " You don't mean—"
Well, *did* he mean ? " I do," he said.
" Not reely ! " She clenched her hands to keep still.

He took the conclusive step. " Well, you and me, Miriam, in a little shop, with a cat and a canary—" He tried too late to get back to a hypothetical note. " Just suppose it ! "

" You mean," said Miriam, " you're in love with me, Elfrid ? "

H. G. WELLS, 1866-1946, *The History of Mr. Polly*

Show Her the Countryside . . .

Come, love, before the bracken's bare,
The heath all rusted red.
Come quick before the fall and share
My single Dingle bed.

No hills or trees can e'er make dark
My hollow sorrel sky.
The nightjar purreth, Darling, hark!
His punctual lullaby.

And on my back I watch, when fine,
The starry space on high.
God's sentries muster into line,
His camp-fires crowded lie.

And like the dawn her rose down blush,
And like the gloaming glimm'ring late,
That touch on sultry cheeks, that flush,
The morn we met to mate.

So come, before Earth's colours fade,
And grey geese honk forlorn;
Before the Rime King whets his blade
And Winter winds his horn.

OLIVER LOCKER-LAMPSON

Or Ring Her Up

Dudley: Hello. Sunset 7349? May I speak to Miss Elsie Mandelspiegel? . . . Elsie? Elsie, this is Dudley. Elsie, I'll jump in the bay if you don't marry me. Life isn't worth living without you. I can't sleep. I can't think of anything but you. All the time. Day and night and night and day. Elsie, I love you. I love you. What? Is this Sunset 7-3-4-9? 7943? Well, what's *your* name? *Lorene?* Lorene Smith? I thought you were Elsie Mandelspiegel. What? Dudley. Yeah. Dudley R. Bostwick. Yeah. R. It stands for Raoul, but I never spell it out. I'm pleased to meet *you*, too. What? There's a lot of noise around here. Where am I? At Nick's, on Pacific Street . . . Yeah. Sure, I'll wait for you. How'll you know me? You'll *know* me. I'll recognise you. Goodbye, now . . .

Now I'm waiting for some dame I've never seen before. Lorene Smith. Never saw her in my life. Just happened to get the wrong number. She turns on the personality, and I'm a cooked Indian. Give me a beer, please.

WILLIAM SAROYAN, *The Time of Your Life*

THE RAMMOND CASE

"Nothing but trouble will ever come of it," she said

by PHYLLIS BENTLEY

ONE of the oddest stories I ever heard was told me the other day by a stranger who had written out of the blue and asked for an appointment. He had heard, he said, that as a novelist I was interested in the strange chances and changes of human destiny, and he felt that his own history was so remarkable it ought to be told to someone and put on record.

Sir Henry Swayne, J.P., proved to be a solid, hearty-looking man in middle life. He was chairman of directors in a large manufacturing concern in Piecehall Lane, Hudley, which I knew by repute to be very thriving. An admirably-cut dark suit with handsome accessories, and one of those glossy, monogrammed, leather brief-cases which are so costly, testified to the reality of his prosperity and his fresh complexion and twinkling eye revealed that he enjoyed it. The story—it appeared—concerned a case in Chancery, the Rammond case.

At this I was disappointed, and I daresay my face showed it, for Sir Henry laughed and shook his head knowingly.

"It's a love story as well," he said. "At least in a way. I reckon very few men met their future wife as I did."

He unstrapped the brief-case and drew out a sheaf of papers, some typed and modern, others old legal documents. He arranged these on the table between us, then took out four small parcels, which he carefully unwrapped.

There was a glass tumbler, which had been broken into several pieces, and repaired by rivets. There was an old silver spoon. There was a handsome Victorian locket, gold and black enamel, with some initials displayed on the front in diamonds. There was finally a very small neat photograph frame, glassed over, in which was exhibited not a portrait but a printed card, a funeral card of the kind fashionable in the last century. *Hudley, January 3rd*, 1877, I read. With quickened interest I begged Sir Henry to go ahead with his story.

Here it is. Naturally, I have changed the names.

It all happened way back in the 1920's, when he was a young man just back from the first Great War, he said. At that time

young Harry Swayne was living with his widowed mother in a small house in Piecehall Lane, an industrial part of Hudley. Though not actually poor, their circumstances were pinched and far from prosperous. His father, a local cloth manufacturer in a small way, had died abruptly of influenza during the war while Harry was away, leaving his affairs in confusion ; his widow had been ungenerously handled by his creditors, and Harry was saddled with a load of weekly payments to clear off the remaining debts. However, he was an up-and-coming young man, steady and undaunted, and doing well at his job in the warehouse department of the large cloth-manufacturing mill down the road. He was fond of his mother and had not yet seen any girl he wanted to marry, so he felt he had plenty of time to pay off the paternal debts and then thrive. Still—a little extra money would have been very useful.

One January evening Harry came home to find his mother in what he described as " a bit of an upset." The item troubling her was a lawyer's advertisement.

I have seen this advertisement ; Sir Henry showed me the faded yellowing clipping, and I later took a copy. The Court of Chancery was inviting any descendants of the kin of Edwin Rammond, who died a bachelor in 1871, to register their claims to benefit under his Will. It seems that Edwin, an only child, left his money to eight " tenants for life," the last of whom had just died. The heirs of these eight were claiming the money, but the Court of Chancery had ruled that it belonged to Edwin's next of kin. On his father's side Edwin had no relations, but his mother, Rachel Rammond *née* Hollins, might possibly have had brothers and sisters, who might have descendants. *From the testator's papers it is believed*, concluded the advertisement, *that the next of kin of Edwin Rammond at the time of his death were his aunts, Phoebe Swayne and Elizabeth, sisters to his mother Rachel and daughters with her of David and Anne Hollins.*

" What ? " exclaimed Harry when he read this. " Phoebe Swayne ? Is she any relation to us, I wonder ? "

" Of course, dear. She was your grandfather's grandmother. I have her locket. She died at your grandfather's house. All the Wills in your father's family mention this money which might come from Edwin Rammond. Your father most carefully left it to you, in his Will."

" Did he, by Jove ? " said Harry thoughtfully. " I reckon I'll go and see these lawyer fellows it mentions."

" No, Harry, don't go ; please don't go," his mother besought him. " You know what Chancery cases are. You'll be involved in endless worry and expense, and get nothing in the end. Think of *Bleak House*."

"That's fiction," said Harry.

"Think of Sam Hill," implored his mother, referring to a famous local case which ran in Chancery for sixty years, in the late eighteenth century. "It's said Dickens took the story of Bleak House from that, you know."

"Well, there's no harm in just asking the lawyers," said Harry.

And of course he went. The lawyers concerned, Messrs. Pearn, Pearn, Kettlewell and Pearn, had given an address in Leeds, and he wrote to them. Later he begged an hour off on Saturday morning and went over by train to see them.

The senior partner, Mr. Adrian Pearn, a lean, white-haired old man with an eyeglass slung on a black ribbon, received him rather stiffly at first, but unbent when Harry explained his business.

"To secure the inheritance, Mr. Swayne, you will need to prove three things," said the old lawyer, gently tapping his eyeglass on his desk to emphasize each one of the three. "First, you must prove that you are indeed the descendant of Phoebe Swayne."

"That shouldn't be difficult," said Harry. "I'm the only one, too, my mother says. I had an aunt, but she died unmarried."

"Next," continued the lawyer, "you must prove that your ancestor, Phoebe Swayne, was the daughter of David and Anne Hollins and sister to Rachel Hollins, mother of Edwin Rammond."

"That mightn't be so easy," said Harry. "It's a long way back, you know."

"You'll need documents certifying Phoebe's marriage and her birth. Third and last, you must prove that no other descendants of David and Anne Hollins exist. Or if any exist, you must prove it and find them. The money will of course be then shared with them."

"Oh, I say!" expostulated Harry. "That's a tall order! I reckon I'd better just forget the whole thing."

"It's a considerable sum of money which is at stake, Mr. Swayne," said the lawyer. "But you must decide for yourself, of course. I am simply acting for the Rammond estate."

"How much money is it?" asked Harry.

"Twenty thousand pounds."

"What!" cried Harry, quite astounded. "Twenty thousand pounds! That's worth some trouble!"

"It is indeed," replied the lawyer smoothly.

Well, of course Harry decided to have a try for it. Mr. Pearn gave him some helpful information about Registrars and Parish Church Registers and so on, and Harry set to work.

At first it all went swimmingly. His mother had his father's death and marriage certificates and knew the date of his birth. Harry got copies of these three certificates at the Hudley Registrar's

Office. The birth certificate of his father, John Henry Swayne, of course gave the name and occupation of *his* father, Harry's grandfather, John Joshua Swayne, and knowing that his father had been older than his aunt, Harry looked in the marriage register for the year previous to his father's birth, and there, sure enough, was the record of his grandfather's marriage. And this entry showed the name of his grandfather's father, William Hollins Swayne.

This of course was just what Harry wanted, for he wanted to prove that William, his great-grandfather, was the son of Phoebe Hollins. With a good many shillings for searching fees, and a good many hours' hard work searching, Harry, calculating that his grandfather would probably have been between twenty and thirty years old when he married, hit at last on the entry of his birth. And in the marriage entries for the year before that, there was the marriage of William Hollins Swayne! On January 1st, 1839, William Hollins Swayne had married, and his father's name was given as John Swayne, manufacturer of Hudley, like all the other Swaynes.

"This is as easy as falling off a tree," said Harry cheerfully.

But this was just where he fell off his own genealogical tree, for he couldn't get back any further. The Hudley Registrar's records went no further back than 1837, when the registration of births, deaths and marriages first came into operation, but of course the Hudley Parish Church had the earlier entries. Harry went off every weekend to the Hudley Parish Church, but, try as he would, he couldn't find any record of William Hollins Swayne's birth, or of William's parents' marriage. Eventually he went through about forty years of birth entries and marriage entries, but William Hollins Swayne and his father and mother were just not to be found.

In despair he went back to Leeds, to Mr. Pearn. The lawyer tapped his eyeglass on his desk thoughtfully.

"Haven't you any family relics, Mr. Swayne?" he suggested.

Harry went back home and searched the cottage, and he and his mother managed to scour out these four, which now stood on the table between us.

The first one, of course, was the locket, which sure enough bore the diamond initials P.S. intertwined. Harry had great excitement one day when, on turning the locket over, he saw that it could be opened. It split open and swung back on a neat little hinge; and inside there was a tiny thin faded photograph of an old woman, with side ringlets, a cap and a look of frail ill health, and lying on the photograph a curl of bright chestnut hair.

The next thing that turned up was the silver spoon, with HANSON, T. E. on the handle in old-fashioned print.

"But who on earth could that belong to?" exclaimed Harry when his mother brought it to him.

"It probably has nothing to do with 'The Case' at all, dear," wailed his mother.

"Well, put it with the locket," said Harry crossly.

The advertisement in the local paper had aroused some interest, and Harry's mother talked about "The Case" to her friends. This vexed Harry at first, but presently he saw the use of it, for one day an elderly married couple brought along an engraved glass, which the woman said had been lent to her mother by Harry's grandmother. Harry almost jumped out of his skin when he saw it, because there, engraved in a lozenge surrounded by twirls and scrolls, were the words: DAVID HOLLINS.

So Harry made up his mind to go through the house very much more thoroughly. He began the job the next weekend; he took the cottage room by room, cupboard by cupboard, drawer by drawer. He opened every box and separated every paper. In a kind of decayed old pocket-book—it was a cigar-case really—black with silver corners and the initials J.J.S. in old-fashioned lettering, a few weekends later he made a find. J.J.S. were his grandfather's initials, you remember, standing for John Joshua Swayne. Well, there in a small side pocket of old John Joshua's cigar-case, tucked away behind a visiting card, lay Phoebe's funeral card! It read:

In Affectionate Remembrance of
PHOEBE SWAYNE
Who departed this life December 30th, 1876,
aged 78 years,
And was this day Interred at the General Cemetery,
Piecehall Lane, Hudley.

Hudley, January 3rd, 1877.

It was Sunday afternoon when Harry found this, and pouring with rain, but off he rushed at once to Piecehall Lane Cemetery. It was disused as a cemetery by that time, the gates locked—he had to fetch the caretaker—and the grass unkempt.

He was soaked to the skin when at last he found Phoebe's resting place, but he fell on his knees and kissed the stone in gratitude, for it seemed to him that he had all he needed now for that twenty thousand pounds. For the headstone commemorated not only *John Swayne of Hudley*, and *Phoebe Swayne widow of the above, and William Hollins Swayne son of the above John and Phoebe*, with their ages and the dates of their deaths, but also *John Joshua Swayne, son of the above William Hollins Swayne*, and his wife, who were already proveably Harry's grandfather and

grandmother. William Hollins Swayne, Harry noted as he copied the inscription, had died in December, 1862, aged 44 years, so he must have been born in 1818.

Next day Harry begged an hour off work in the afternoon, went to the Parish Church and searched the births' register for the year 1818 over and over again. But there was no trace of young William Hollins Swayne. Nor was there any marriage of John and Phoebe, in the years nearby.

By this time Harry and the Hudley Registrar had grown quite friendly, and in his bitter disappointment Harry went to his office and had a talk with him now.

"I don't see why you're so disheartened," said the Registrar. "You've proved the first part of your case. You are now definitely the descendant, and the only descendant, of Phoebe who married John Swayne."

"Yes, but without her marriage lines, or William Hollins Swayne's birth certificate, I can't prove Phoebe was a Hollins."

"Let's look at William's marriage lines again," suggested the Registrar, to cheer him up.

"Here we are—January 1st, 1839," he said, opening the relevant volume. He ran his forefinger along the entry relating to the marriage of William Hollins Swayne and Sarah Oates. "That's funny!" he exclaimed.

"What?" gasped Harry, who was all keyed up with excitement and disappointment.

"It's nothing relevant, I'm afraid," apologized the Registrar. "But, you see, under the heading *Age*, for William the entry is *Full Age*."

"Well, what of that?"

"Don't you see? You've just found out he was born in 1818. Now, if he was born in 1818, and is of full age, that means twenty-one, by January 1st, the very first day, of 1839, he must have been born on January 1st in 1818."

"They probably wouldn't bother about a week or two," said Harry indifferently.

"Certainly they would!" exclaimed the Registrar. "You may rely upon it that he was born on January 1st, 1818."

"That's not much help," growled poor Harry.

"It may be. It narrows your search. Don't you see what your facts lead to?" said the Registrar kindly. "Phoebe and John Swayne were married, and their son was born, in some other place, not Hudley."

Harry groaned. "But where? Where?"

"Where did Rachel Rammond and her husband live?"

"Leeds. He was a cloth merchant."

" Well, you might try there. But personally," said the Registrar, " personally, I should advertise."

" I'd best give it up," said Harry mournfully.

However, after a day or two's thought, he set his teeth and persevered with the Rammond case. He advertised in the two main Yorkshire newspapers for the marriage certificate of John Swayne and Phoebe Hollins, married sometime between 1815 and 1817.

No answer at all came to his advertisement.

Then Harry bought a map of Yorkshire and drew a ten mile circle with Hudley as centre. His heart sank as he saw how many parishes lay within the circle, but staunchly and stubbornly he proceeded to visit or write to every church in the circle.

He also went to the *Hudley News* and persuaded them to print a reproduction of the faded photograph of his ancestor. Under a caption : DID YOU KNOW THIS LADY ? a sentence said succinctly that information about Phoebe Swayne's marriage was wanted to aid in the settlement of a Will in Chancery.

Several persons who had known Mrs. Phoebe Swayne in her later years wrote to say so, but though Harry visited them all most carefully, nothing in the least helpful emerged from their reminiscences. None of them had known her as Phoebe Hollins. One very old man came to see him whose mother had been nurse to Phoebe Swayne's baby, but apart from his mysterious insistence that there had been village talk of a " sideslip," Harry could get no more out of him. Harry drew a rather larger circle on the map round Hudley, and began to write more letters to Vicars and visit more churches.

It was now April, fifteen months after Harry had first begun the search. Postponements of the case had twice been secured by Messrs. Pearn, Pearn, Kettlewell and Pearn, between whom and Harry a great deal of useless correspondence had passed, Harry continually telling them of his discoveries and Mr. Pearn always replying that they were only presumptive evidence, the marriage certificate of Phoebe must be found.

Now a letter came from Mr. Pearn to say that the Case would come up very soon, possibly even next week. Harry spent the whole weekend searching Church Registers, but in vain. On Monday he went straight from work, without bite or sup, to the same task. In vain. Late on Monday night he sat beside the dying fire at home, tired, cold, worried and thoroughly disheartened. As he got up to go to bed he caught sight of himself in the mirror above the mantelpiece ; his face was pale, lined, haggard.

" My mother's right," he told himself. " I must give up this Chancery business. I shall lose my health, and then where should we be ? And the expense isn't to be borne any longer."

Shortly after the breakfast interval at the mill next morning the son of the owner came into the warehouse. He knew about Harry's Case, having several times given him hours off to pursue his researches.

"Why, Harry," said he, "do you know that case you're interested in is coming up in London this Friday?"

This was a shock to Harry, who hadn't understood that it was due quite so soon. But he replied grimly, "Yes, I know all right."

"And have you got your evidence all fixed up, then?"

"No."

"That's a pity!" exclaimed the young man. "Have you given up the idea of pressing your claim, then? It's all in the newspaper again this morning."

"See here, Mr. Dick," said Harry vehemently. "I never want to hear anything about that case again. I'm at the end of my tether and I can't go on any longer. I've spent a miserable weekend searching, and I can't do anything more."

There was a pause. "How are you on with your work, Harry?" said the young man.

"I'm pretty well up with it this morning."

"If we gave you the day off now, could you do anything, do you think?"

"Nay, I've done all I can think of," said Harry wretchedly.

"It seems a pity to give up after all your work. Why don't you take the day, and at least go and see your lawyer again?"

"Well," began Harry doubtfully. Then: "I will!" he cried.

He went off in his working clothes to Leeds.

"Tell me again exactly what evidence you have collected," said Mr. Pearn. Harry poured it all out. "It is clear," said the lawyer thoughtfully, "that you have firmly established your descent from Phoebe and John Swayne."

"That I have," said Harry. "And from evidence already with Chancery, David and Anne Hollins had a daughter Phoebe, who married a Swayne presumably, since she was called Swayne when Edwin Rammond died. The dates of my Phoebe Swayne would be just right for Phoebe Hollins. My family owns an old glass with David Hollins' name engraved on it. Surely it's enough."

The lawyer shook his head. "The Master doesn't think so," he said. "You see, there are no documents establishing any facts about David and Anne and Phoebe, only references to them in a vague letter of Edwin Rammond's. No—without Phoebe's marriage certificate, nothing can be done."

"What will happen, then?" demanded Harry.

" To put it in simple words, the decision will be postponed for lack of evidence."

" And then what ? "

" If you discover more evidence, you will be able to raise the case again."

" And if it still isn't definite enough ? "

" Decision will be postponed again. And so it will go on," said the lawyer gravely, " until the costs of the continued cases have eaten up the whole amount of the inheritance."

" I'd best give it up," said Harry.

" If you could only get the marriage certificate of John and Phoebe Swayne ! "

" I don't know how else to try for it, I'm sure."

The old lawyer sat tapping his eyeglass thoughtfully. " I wonder," he said, " if Mr. Ligg could advise you."

Mr. Ligg, it seemed, was a Leeds solicitor, a member of a noted Antiquarian Society.

Harry hurried out, but not being very familiar with the city, he was some time in finding the right address. Just as he climbed the dusty stairs, a door banged on the landing above and a gentleman began to descend towards him. Harry looked at him shrewdly, wondering whether he was likely to give him expert help for nothing. In appearance he was markedly different from Mr. Pearn. Where Mr. Pearn was spruce, well-groomed, erect and formal, this man was untidy, in an old baggy suit, with old-fashioned looped pincenez perched crookedly on his large nose, and a drooping moustache. His face was lined and faded, his eyes blue and mild. And yet he had an air of distinction and kindness.

" Are you Mr. Ligg ? " asked Harry.

Peering at him from behind shaggy eyebrows, Mr. Ligg admitted that was his name. " I'm just going out to luncheon," he added in a high mild tone.

" Mr. Pearn told me to come to you—I'm kept out of twenty thousand pounds by lack of one old marriage certificate," blurted Harry.

Mr. Ligg's blue eyes lighted at once. " Come in, come in ! " he cried, turning back towards his office.

" Now, my dear young man, lay the whole problem before me." He beamed at Harry encouragingly over his pincenez, and Harry poured out the whole story.

" There is just one suggestion I can make," said Mr. Ligg when he had finished. " Possibly John and Phoebe Swayne married not by banns but by licence. Such licences are kept ; and can be seen, as far as this diocese is concerned, at the Diocesan Registry in York. The licence would be proof sufficient, and

also, it would state the parish church where they were married."

"What's the difference between banns and licence?" asked Harry puzzled.

"Licences are often used when the parties—h'm—wish to marry in a hurry," said Mr. Ligg mildly, explaining the difference in procedure.

"Oh," said Harry, not taking it in. "Well. I wonder whether it's worth trying."

"I think it is," said Mr. Ligg. "Especially as the young lady seems to have been very young, you know."

Harry was so tired, so harassed, so bewildered and worried that at the time he didn't see the point of this remark. Besides, he was busy wondering what the fare from Leeds to York was, and whether he could spare it.

"Ask for Mr. Johnson," Mr. Ligg went on, "and if necessary mention my name. But it would be wiser to make an appointment, you know, and go another day. I'm afraid you'll find the search a long task, and the Registry closes at four o'clock promptly. Wouldn't you prefer to engage some skilled person to make the search for you?"

"I've neither the time nor the money for that," Harry told him bluntly.

Mr. Ligg wished him good luck and went out to his belated lunch.

The magnitude of the stake drew Harry on; he hurried to the station, and found himself in York at a quarter to three. Running out of the station he never stopped until he reached the Registry.

"Is Mr. Johnson in?" he asked.

"No, sir. He doesn't usually come in on Tuesday afternoons."

Harry's heart sank. "It's extremely urgent. I've come from a friend of his in Leeds—a Mr. Ligg."

At the sound of this name an old clerk came forward.

"Mr. Ligg, sir? We know Mr. Ligg very well. It's possible Mr. Johnson may come in for a few moments to pick up some papers, this afternoon. Would you care to call again?"

"I'll wait," said Harry.

"I'm afraid I must ask you to wait outside, sir," said the old clerk. "Unless you have an appointment?"

Harry shook his head and went outside.

About twenty minutes elapsed, then someone approached the Registry and entered. Harry rushed in once more.

"Was that Mr. Johnson?"

"Yes. Wait a moment."

Mr. Johnson came over to him.

"You wish to search? Have you made an appointment? Search is only allowed by previous arrangement."

This was a check indeed. Explaining his long journey, and the imminence of the Chancery case, Harry begged earnestly for permission to search, saying that he was acting on Mr. Ligg's advice in the matter. There was a pause. Then :

" Let the young man have what he wants," said Mr. Johnson.

" Come with me, sir," said the clerk, smiling pleasantly. Bent double, and limping slightly, he led Harry into a room on the left, in which were two other clerks and two men looking over some papers—searchers like Harry. The clerk took Harry to an old oak table fixture built into a recess under an arched window and asked : " Now what can I get for you ? "

" The marriage licences for 1817 to begin with," said Harry briskly.

A look of pity came over the clerk's face. " I'm afraid I must remind you, sir," he said, " that we close at four o'clock."

Harry glanced up at the large round clock on the wall. It showed half-past three. Uneasiness stirred in him. " I shall have to look sharp then, shan't I ? " he said with a ghastly attempt at a smile.

The old clerk and two of the youths had already left the room. After a wait which seemed to last for ever and indeed occupied five of his precious thirty minutes, Harry saw them entering the room from a back doorway. Each was carrying a pile of papers. Two of the piles were of similar height, say about two feet thick ; the third was somewhat smaller. The piles consisted of single sheets of crisp paper, perhaps eight inches by eleven in size, strung close together —hundreds and hundreds of single sheets of paper, each sheet a marriage licence for the year 1817 in Yorkshire. The clerks put these piles on the table and looked at Harry compassionately.

Harry began to turn the sheets over as rapidly as was consistent with examining them. They had been dusted over but were still thick in dirt, as was only to be expected after more than a hundred years. The contracting parties had signed at the foot of the page, which was a blessing, but " signed " was a very polite term for these writings. Many were illegible scrawls ; the better ones had been written by parson and clerk, and attested by a cross on the part of the illiterate wife or husband.

" Now keep your head, lad," Harry admonished himself. " Their son was born in January 1818, so that means I needn't look at any months after May."

But suddenly, at this last moment, Harry had a wild flash of inspiration. If his search here conformed to the facts at all, Phoebe and John had married by licence. So they might have been in a hurry to marry. There had been " talk " about the marriage ; there had been what the old man called a " sideslip." Of course, of course ! Phoebe and John Swayne had married in a hurry, because a child

conceived out of wedlock was coming to them. That child had been born in January 1818, on the first of January 1818; Harry was looking at dates far too early. Try July, try August. Fumbling and snatching to find where these two months divided, suddenly Harry gave a hoarse shout: "I've found it!"

He pulled the sheets wider apart to get a full view of the writing. Yes! There it was: John Swayne and Phoebe Hollins.

"We're so very very glad," the clerk was babbling. "So many people come here and so few ever find anything. It's a real treat to meet someone who has found something."

"Where were they married?" quavered Harry feebly.

"Ashworth, July 21, 1817," replied the clerk.

The little town of Ashworth stood between Leeds and York, outside the largest of the circles which Harry had drawn.

Harry obtained a copy of the marriage licence, telephoned Mr. Pearn and sent the copy to him by registered post, then caught the train back to Hudley in a state of ineffable joy and thankfulness. The twenty thousand pounds were in the bag at last.

But of course they weren't. The Master said there was sufficient evidence to justify the postponement of the Case, but not sufficient to allow Harry's claim. Evidence that Phoebe was indeed the daughter of the David and Anne Hollins whose daughter was Rachel Rammond, was required. *Probably you'll get that easily at Ashworth Church, now you know that Phoebe was married there*, wrote Mr. Pearn cheerfully. *You may find it more difficult to provide particulars of the descendants of Phoebe's brothers and sisters, if any; but these are strictly necessary.*

The Saturday after he received this, Harry put on his good suit and set out for Ashworth.

He went first to the Vicarage, but unfortunately the Vicar was on holiday. But, said the Vicarage maid, the Verger had the keys of the vestry and the safe where the registers were kept.

Harry soon found the brass plate which announced St. Swithin's Verger.

A thin pale lad in his teens appeared at the door and said quietly, "You'll find him at the *Ring o' Bells*."

He went into the *Ring o' Bells*, and there was the Verger, as drunk as a lord. Harry dragged him off ruthlessly, and a few minutes later, when they reached the Church, the Verger seemed to come more to himself again, and told Harry that he was under notice, that he was not really allowed to open the safe containing the registers, though he had the keys; there had been trouble about it before. Harry had better come another time when the Vicar was at home.

But a ten shilling note—in those days quite a lot of money—

held up by Harry, settled the matter. The Verger unlocked the safe door, and laid the registers out on the long table in the Vestry.

Well, in a quarter of an hour Harry had found the entry of the marriage of Phoebe Hollins and John Swayne in July, 1817, and the entry of Phoebe's birth, her father and mother being David and Anne Hollins, sure enough. The owner of the glass tumbler was traced at last. From there, Harry ranged back and forth in the births and marriages registers, and found David and Anne's marriage, and the births of all their five children—Rachel, Phoebe, George, Nancy and Elizabeth. By this time the Verger had sobered up and become interested, and Harry told him about the twenty thousand pounds. The Verger's red-rimmed eyes nearly fell out of his head, and he looked so wistful that Harry was sorry for him, and told him sharply that he needn't begin being envious yet, for the descendants of all those Hollins children would have to be traced. Rachel who married a Rammond and had the son who left the money was all accounted for, and Phoebe who was Harry's ancestor was all settled too. But what about George, Nancy and Elizabeth ? Years of work on them and their children seemed to lie before him.

" Oh well," said the Verger, " a good many of them died off ; you can see them on the Hollins gravestone."

" What ? " shouted Harry. " Were David and Anne buried here too ? "

" Of course," said the Verger. " It's a big vault ; the stone is the sixth down from the west door."

Harry ran out and down the path, and there, sure enough, was the old gravestone. The corners were crumbling and the whole stone flaking, but the letters were still quite readable, and there they all were, quite plain, with the dates of their deaths : David Hollins, Anne wife of the above, Nancy daughter of the above who died in infancy, George son of the above who died when he was a lad of seventeen. Harry ran back to the registers again, looked them all up and found that George had died a bachelor. By this time he was so excited that he could hardly breathe. When the Vicar came back from his holiday he could get the necessary certificates as easy as winking, and it began to look as though he was going to prove to be the only living descendant of David and Anne Hollins.

" But steady now," said Harry to himself, " there's one Hollins still missing—Elizabeth. She's mentioned in Edwin Rammond's papers, remember ? "

Elizabeth's *surname* wasn't mentioned in the papers, he remembered, so it was possible she had died unmarried ; and oh ! how Harry longed that such had been the case. But such luck was too

much to hope for, and suddenly Harry remembered the old silver spoon. In his mind's eye he saw the markings :

HANSON
T E

" I bet Elizabeth married a Thomas Hanson," he said.

" Oh well," said the Verger again, " there's a Hanson grave, you know. Right down at the far corner of the graveyard."

Well, Harry ran out again and down the stony paths, stumbling and almost falling in his excitement. The Hanson gravestone was a big handsome affair, a solid square stone plinth supporting a kind of pyramid with stone crochet-work up the edges—which was probably, thought Harry, why the Verger remembered it. And there they were, Thomas Hanson on one side of the plinth, and his wife Elizabeth on another, and as if to make everything clear and easy for Harry, Elizabeth was described as *wife of Thomas Hanson and daughter of David Hollins of this town.* Both their birth and death dates were given, as is sometimes the case on such stones, so it would be child's play to track them down. With a feeling of jubilation so intense that it almost choked him, Harry turned the corner of the plinth to return to the front façade. And there on the third side of the plinth he read these words :

Also In Loving Memory of Thomas Hollins Hanson only child of Thomas and Elizabeth Hanson, who was killed in the battle of Gettysburg in America, in July, 1863.

" My God ! " cried Harry. " He'll have left American descendants ! "

He stood there motionless, while his jubilation of a moment ago ran all the way down the scale to black despair. It would take years and years, and hundreds of pounds, to track down Thomas Hollins Hanson and his American issue, if indeed it were in any way possible at all. A man killed in battle doesn't usually leave his affairs very tidily arranged, and often hasn't a gravestone at all. Besides, though Harry was not a man of great education, he knew that America was a huge place. It would be like looking for a needle in a haystack, to search for a man whose dwelling-place was unknown, whose date of arrival in America even was unknown, and who was killed sixty years ago.

" Oh, Thomas, Thomas ! " said Harry, half humorously, shaking his head. " Why did you go to America, old chap ? Why didn't you stay at home ? "

As Harry stood there, he began to feel as though this ending to

his search was a kind of judgment on him. Why should he expect to be made rich without effort of his own ? Honest work was the only right way to riches, thought Harry soberly. And look at the callous way he'd been treating his ancestors' life-stories ! He'd been positively glad when he found poor little Phoebe's " sideslip," which must have caused her such anguish in her day. (Was that why John and Phoebe Swayne had moved away to Hudley, he wondered ? Very likely.) He'd rejoiced over Nancy's death in infancy, and had been delighted when David and Anne lost their only son at seventeen. He'd actually *wanted* Elizabeth to have no children, though what a grievous disappointment that would have been to her !

Yes, Harry felt ashamed of himself, and as he stood there in the spring sunshine, with everything very quiet about him, the graveyard lined with windblown trees, the West Riding hills in the distance, the streets around quiet because it was Saturday afternoon, he spoke to his ancestors, real living human beings who had rejoiced and suffered just as he did. He said, very quietly : " I'm sorry, folks."

And he took off his hat in respect and stood looking at the gravestone and thinking about death and love and life.

Presently he heard a step on the rough path behind him. He supposed it was the Verger come to seek him, and steeled himself to behave with decent fortitude, and turned.

But it was not the Verger. It was a young woman of about his own age, very neat and trim in a blue suit, with short bright hair—bobbed hair was in fashion then for women—and a very sweet, charming, merry face. Whether it was her hair, which oddly enough was exactly the colour of the ringlet in Phoebe's locket—perhaps the Hollins were chestnut-haired folk ?—or whether it was just a feeling on Harry's part, coming from his being so solemn just before, he wasn't sure ; but somehow he felt absolutely certain at once of her identity.

" You're Elizabeth Hollins Hanson," he said : " The great-granddaughter of Thomas Hollins Hanson, who was killed at Gettysburg in 1863."

" Why, that's just what I am," she said. " But how did you know ? "

" You've come to look at the grave of your ancestors."

" Yes. I've come to Europe for my Spring vacation—I teach school back home in Massachusetts—and I'm seeking out my forbears. We are very proud of my great-grandfather, and we have a miniature of his mother Elizabeth, you know."

" Can you prove your descent from Thomas Hollins Hanson ? "

" Surely."

" Are you his only descendant ? "

" Yes. My brother was killed in the war," she said softly.

" Did you ever hear of Edwin Rammond ? "

" Never."

" Are you interested in any Chancery case ? "

" What's a Chancery case ? "

" Well, Miss Hanson," said Harry, smiling and going up to her, " I'm ten thousand pounds poorer for your existence—but it's worth it."

" What do you mean ? " said Elizabeth, laughing and colouring.

" Come and have a cup of tea with me, and I'll explain. We're relatives in a way, you know," he added as she hesitated. " We have the same great-great-great-grandfather."

Perhaps because she liked the way Harry had stood paying his respects at her ancestors' grave with his hat off, she went with him and heard the story.

And so presently Harry Swayne set off to London to the Court of Chancery, with an affidavit and twenty-one exhibits, and his claim and that of Elizabeth Hollins Hanson to Edwin Rammond's money were allowed. The case was settled, the Counsel complimented Harry on his ingenuity and tenacity, and Harry and Elizabeth divided the twenty thousand pounds.

" Well," said I, as Sir Henry Swayne reached this point of his story, " there certainly can't be many men who lost ten thousand pounds by a chance meeting with a young lady."

Sir Henry coloured. " Nay—I didn't lose the ten thousand in the end. It came into the family, like," he said.

" How so ? "

" Well—that's how the Hollins glass got broken, you see."

" I don't understand," said I, puzzled.

" I was showing Elizabeth the family relics. The Hollins glass was in her hand when suddenly I—we—kissed. The glass was crushed between us."

" Oh—you *married* the other claimant in the Rammond Case ? "

" Aye—married and lived happy ever after," beamed Sir Henry.

" I hope you keep all your family's birth and marriage certificates together very carefully," I joked.

" Trust me ! " said Sir Henry grimly, nodding his head.

* * *

PREJUDICE

A vagrant opinion without visible means of support.

AMBROSE BIERCE, *The Devil's Dictionary*

THE CAMEL

The disaster was too enormous for one man to bear alone!

by GERALD BULLETT

WINTERBROOK, at the age of forty-nine, was a patient man; and this April morning he had need of patience. To a superficial observer the need would not perhaps have been apparent. He possessed a small convenient Georgian house, kindly and mellowed, set in a walled garden, and situated three miles or so from the town and the university; an enviable academic reputation; and a charming, plump, pretty, vivacious wife some fifteen years his junior. From where he sat at the breakfast table he could see a garden full of sunshine and a strip of blue sky; and into his mind there floated what was not immediately visible—green miles of just the kind of rather flat unsensational countryside that he so greatly preferred to scenery in the romantic manner.

Apart from contemplation of the atom, and the rapture of pottering about his greenhouse and cultivating delicate seedlings in boxes, there was nothing he enjoyed so much as cycling on a fine day along the gentle country roads that stretched between his house and the university; and even in wet weather he did not complain, for he found something inspiriting in the beating of the rain on his face.

Long, loose-limbed, upward-looking, walking as though on springs, his figure was a familiar and welcome sight to hundreds who were unaware of his claim to distinction; and the simplicity of his manners, his engaging carelessness of dignity, had won the hearts of more than one generation of undergraduates. His clothes were often disordered, and he had been known to lace his boots with string; but he was neither unconventional nor fundamentally eccentric: he differed from his fellows in one respect only, the size of his brain.

All the ingredients of happiness were to his hand: what more could a man ask? Winterbrook asked nothing more. He was, in general, well content with his lot: the more so because he never gave the matter a moment's attention. Indeed, far fewer comforts would have contented him; for he possessed that capacity for losing oneself in work, and that preoccupation with things of the mind,

which, if they do not in themselves create happiness, at least make active unhappiness next to impossible. What he did ask at this moment, or what at least he did begin definitely to wish for, was some brief respite from the company of Aubrey Medwin, his wife's cousin by her first marriage.

The fellow had been his guest for three weeks and showed no signs of going. He was writing a novel, or pretended to be; and the companionship of Mrs. Winterbrook, he said, was his chief inspiration. In token perhaps of his gratitude, he made frivolous love to her at every meal-time, and love not so frivolous on less public occasions.

Well, thought Winterbrook, if it amuses her, there's no harm in that. Nevertheless he had to confess that he did not like this young man. He found his manners affected, his wit shallow, and his speech intolerable. Refinement of accent was Medwin's chief contribution to the world's culture. All English vowels, and many English consonants, had already been refined out of existence by him; and given time he would purge the whole language of its appalling vulgarity. In Medwin's mouth, juice became duice, and Jews became Dews; and there was nothing he endyoyed so much as whatever pastime, at any given moment, Mrs. Winterbrook happened to suggest to him. "I'd adaw it," he would say.

Today he took the initiative in suggestion.

"Shall we go on the river today, Barbara?"

"Let's," said Mrs. Winterbrook.

"Well," said Winterbrook, "if you're going on the river with Medwin, Barbara, let me recommend you to insist on a punt."

"Too, too barbarous for Barbara," protested Medwin.

"Better than drowning," said Winterbrook, moodily.

Medwin raised his eyebrows. "How elliptical you are, Bertie!"

Winterbrook went on with his breakfast. To be called Bertie by this young man irritated him. Yet he did not in general give a thought to such trifles. He was not unaware, and it did not trouble him in the least, that he and his wife were known to the irreverent as Bertie and Babs, and had been so known ever since his marriage two years ago. For that event, that surprising event, had given Winterbrook a news-value, as they elegantly say, and had given rise to endless tea-table talk and conjecture. Old Winterbrook getting married! And—what was still more remarkable—old Winterbrook marrying the lively young widow, Mrs. Gannett. Every one had been surprised, and Winterbrook perhaps most of all.

How had it happened? That was a question which probably only Mrs. Gannett herself could have answered; and there is no record of her doing so. As for Winterbrook, he had other problems to engage his mind. He had wanted her; he had got her; he still

found her enchanting: no need, therefore, to study whys and wherefores. Had he concerned himself with the question he might perhaps have decided that the true cause was to be found in what had happened a quarter of a century before, at a College Ball: when he, a shy young undergraduate, had found himself escorting Cheswick's red-headed cousin through the cloisters in search of the seclusion she asked for.

On the lawn they had just left, illumined by fairy-lights and sustained in excitement by fiddle-music, couples as young and ingenuous as themselves were still dancing. But here there were shadows; the lights and the laughter were (to the imagination) a distant rumour; and suddenly it flashed into young Herbert's mind that here, were she willing, a girl might be kissed, and no one be the wiser. He had never, as it chanced, seen the red-headed girl again (he sighed for her a little, for she was very charming), but that small episode had left a starry bloom in his memory; and when, a lifetime afterwards and at just such another College Ball, Mrs. Gannett had asked to be shown the Little Court, thus obliging him to pass with her through that same cloister, the coincidence (for Mrs. Gannett, too, had red hair) was a miracle not to be resisted. So it was by kissing Miss Cheswick in youth that he became married to Barbara Gannett in middle age.

But he did not remember these things now. What he did remember, fitfully, was his uncomfortable experience of last evening, when, blundering suddenly into the drawing-room in search of his spectacles, he had surprised his wife in Medwin's arms. Most embarrassing! "Sorry," he mumbled, "I didn't know anyone was here." Embarrassing, and even disturbing.

Back in his study he was surprised to find himself trembling. So it had got as far as that, had it? Well, there wasn't much further to go. Queer way of amusing herself. Queer taste. And, young though she was, Medwin was still younger. "However," said Winterbrook aloud, "she must please herself, I suppose."

Alarmed to find how much this trifling incident meant to him, he went to his shelves and snatched at a book as a drowning man might snatch at a lifebelt. He opened it anywhere, and read industriously. At first his mind refused it. But presently he came to this: "The equations (12) and (13) of the preceding Art. enable us to examine a related question of some interest, viz., the generation and maintenance of waves against viscosity, by suitable forces applied to the surface. If the external forces p'_{yy}, p'_{xy} be given multiples of $e^{ikx + at}$, where k and a are prescribed, the equations in question determine A and C, and thence, by (9) the value of η. Thus we find . . ."

Standing by his shelves, with the book in his hand, he read for

ten quiet minutes. And when he reached the end of the fascinating argument he sighed deeply, and with a pleasure more than half æsthetic. Elementary, no doubt; but very beautiful, wonderfully satisfying. He thanked heaven for having endowed him with simple tastes. Aubrey Medwin was forgotten.

But in Aubrey Medwin's presence it was impossible to forget Aubrey Medwin. Aubrey Medwin saw to that. And it was in Winterbrook's mind this morning that if this fellow and Babs were resolved to go on the river, and play at being lovers as he had seen them playing last night, a punt was much safer than a canoe. "For all amatory purposes," he wanted to say, "I recommend a punt." But he did not say it. The remark was too much in Medwin's own manner, and would probably be received with delight. And though Winterbrook was the kindliest of men, and the least censorious, to give delight was not his present wish. All he wanted at the moment was to protect his wife from the danger of drowning. It is idle to ask why.

"And, Bertie darling," said Mrs. Winterbrook suddenly, helping herself to the last piece of toast, "you'll not be using the study tonight, will you?"

Winterbrook looked up from his plate. "Eh?" The artless-seeming question made him profoundly unhappy. What the deuce now!

"Of course you won't dear. You've promised to spend the evening with Dr. Brake."

"Brake? Spend the evening with Brake? Was it arranged?"

"You forgetful old thing! Of course it was arranged. 'Drop in to coffee,' he said."

"I don't remember anything about it. But supposing I do go to see Brake, what's that got to do with my study?"

"Well, you won't be using it, that's all, dear. And it'll be free for poor Aubrey. He wants to do some of his novel, and he finds the atmosphere of the study just right for him—don't you, Aubrey?"

"So too conducive," corroborated Aubrey.

Winterbrook glanced from face to face. There was nothing there to help him; there was nothing but cheerful obtuseness. They meant no harm, he reflected: they simply didn't understand how important it was to him to have one room in the house inviolably his own. A foolish whim, perhaps; yet, after last night, he clung to it more eagerly than ever.

"Forgive me," he said, bowing courteously to his tormentor, "but it's a little fad of mine, Medwin, and . . . in short, my study is inhospitable and would rather not entertain visitors."

"Really!" exclaimed Medwin. "How old-world!"

"Don't be so uncouth, Bertie darling!" cried Mrs. Winterbrook

in affected horror. " He doesn't mean it, Aubrey. Of *course* you can use the room. Whatever next ! And you must write me a really nice chapter in it. Will you ? "

She exchanged an intimate glance with Medwin. Winterbrook shrugged his shoulders. It was useless to say more. And in a conscientious endeavour to put the annoyance out of mind, he began to think with affection of the little green seedlings that he must presently visit in the greenhouse, especially his *lychnis haageana.* Joyous and liberating thought.

But as he stepped into the garden it was not first of his seedlings that he thought. The problem of Medwin still pressed for solution. What did Barbara see in the young man that could counteract unprepossessing physical characteristics of which his voice and speech were not the least important ? His little pinched nose, his girlish complexion, his mouthful of somewhat prominent teeth, his ferret eagerness—what did she make of all this ? He did not intend to miss anything, that young man. A sharp little rat, for all his affectation of languor ! Winterbrook, catching himself at this business of enumerating his guest's qualities with a passion not entirely scientific, was suddenly a little ashamed of himself. For after all the fellow *was* his guest—or Barbara's guest, which came to the same thing. Moreover, Barbara liked him.

That was the baffling fact that put all Winterbrook's calculations into confusion. Winterbrook himself was not a literary man, and he was more than ready to respect any one who practised that mystery. He had considerable faith in Barbara's judgment, whether of men or of books ; and Barbara had assured him that Aubrey Medwin had real genius. She even went so far as to declare that he possessed the finest critical mind of his generation. Winterbrook, with all his wish to believe her, had been unable to refrain from pointing out that until she had taken pains to acquaint herself with all other minds, her statement must partake of the nature of conjecture. That was his very phrase, and she had laughed at him for it, calling him a pompous old goose.

The odd thing was that one never saw any work of Medwin's. His taste was so exacting, his standard so inconceivably lofty, that he could not, it appeared, bring himself to commit his subtlety to paper, still less publish it to the eyes of a despised world. He was nearly thirty, and not a line of his writing had ever achieved print. " He's biding his time," said Mrs. Winterbrook. " He won't let anyone see a thing until he's satisfied that it does him justice. He's so proud and sensitive ; such an artist." So Medwin remained, and seemed content to remain, a literary genius who had produced no literature.

" I hope he spells better than he pronounces," Winterbrook had said. But Barbara had only asked him not to be so uncouth : it was her last word in any argument.

But now Winterbrook was at the threshold of the greenhouse, his sanctuary ; and there not even the all-pervasive thought of Aubrey Medwin could accompany him. He shut the door carefully behind him and took a deep breath of that delicious smell, warm, moist, earthy, and heavy with flowery scents. Though he did not realize it, all the best of his childhood was in that smell.

In just such a greenhouse, more than forty years ago, he had spent some of the most rapturous moments of his life ; and the message that now entered his nostrils set his nerves delicately vibrating in the mode of an ancient happiness. And, unexpectedly, for no reason that he was aware of, he remembered his grandmother, a monstrous intimidating organism swathed in black brocade and crowned with a white cap, whom it was one's duty to love, and from whom, as from a remote world, came occasional half-crowns. He remembered how he had once thought it the very height of bliss to be allowed a ride in her bathchair.

The smell and touch of its upholstery came back to him : the hard shiny cushion was warm under his inquisitive palm. And now the gate that gave on to the road squeaked on its hinge ; the back wheels of the chair were lifted from the ground ; bump, bump, they were down the step, and Granny was still alive, and he heard the voice of her paid companion, Miss Rogers, saying "-Yes, Mrs. Winterbrook," and " No, Mrs. Winterbrook " ; and presently this Miss Rogers, a kind-hearted leather-faced woman, was calling his attention (as if it needed calling !) to the rooks so noisy and so busy in the elms, and telling him that Farmer Godfrey's cows were so clever that they could find their way home at bedtime all by themselves. "All by themselves, darling. Isn't that nice ! "

And, finally, bachelor Uncle David appeared in his thoughts and provided the key to this reminiscence ; for it was Uncle David who had first opened for him the door of a greenhouse. He wondered if Brake's little boy, who had been shown round the garden yesterday by Mrs. Brake, had enjoyed this greenhouse as deeply as he, Bertie Winterbrook, had enjoyed Uncle David's.

The first breath of the enchantment transported him to paradise ; and his first glance was a confirmation of joy. They were all there, constant in beauty, all silently and excitingly alive. The geraniums bloomed in splendour ; the japonica was in bud ; the little orange tree, which had been sick, was now well again. Potted ferns brought the forest within reach of his eager senses ; daffodils and jonquils charmed him with their quietness ; and the firebush, with its long clustering spikes of flame, seemed today more beautiful and

astonishing than ever, a fantastic thought, an epigram of colour and form presented against a background of dark varnished leaves. One glance showed him these; and now, he thought, let's have a look at the seed-boxes.

He looked first at the lettuces, and turned suddenly hot with anger and cold with dread. The lettuces were wrecked: two lay, already withered, on the ground; five others, uprooted, were expiring at leisure in their common bed; the rest were untouched. "Brake's damned brat! Can't keep his fingers off anything, the little *beast!*"

In terror Winterbrook turned to the box that contained the most precious of his seedlings, *lychnis haageana*, and what he saw almost unmanned him. Infinite pains he had spent on the care of these lovely things, these lovely and so difficult things; and with maternal pride and joy he had yearned over the little green shoots that had lately appeared to reward him. And now they were destroyed. Idiot fingers had ravished them from their soil, and flung them, wantonly, here and there on the ground. That little *beast* of Brake's. It was too much.

He plunged back to the house, his mind and heart in a riot of angry agitation. The disaster was too enormous for one man to bear alone. He needed an audience.

"My seedlings!" he cried. "Barbara, d'you hear? My young seedlings—all destroyed!"

Barbara and Medwin still lingered in the breakfast-room. It was there he found them.

"Bertie darling, what on earth are you raving about? Don't be so un—"

"I tell you," said Winterbrook, in a low trembling voice, "that devilish child has torn up my seedlings, my precious *lychnis haageana*. If I could get at him I'd wring his beastly little neck."

"Splendid fellah!" said Medwin. "I'll help hide the body for you."

"My dear Bertie," said Barbara, looking a little shocked, "what a fuss to make about a few flowers. Where's your sense of humour?"

"Sense of humour be damned. Where's your imagination? And they weren't flowers: they were seedlings, and I'd brought 'em on beautifully. Weeks and weeks I've waited for them; endless trouble I've taken with them. And now that blasted little boy—"

"Nonsense, Bertie! He's a sweet little boy!"

"Oh, he's a sweet little boy, is he!" said Winterbrook. "Very well. I'll say no more about it." His voice was unnaturally calm. "Medwin, how long will it take you to pack?"

"Pack?" Medwin was genuinely mystified.

"Yes, pack. Is the word unfamiliar to you? Pack your

belongings. Your clothes, your books, your hair-oil. How long will it take you to get them together and put them into a bag ? "

Medwin laughed. It seemed the only thing to do.

" Bertie," said Barbara sharply, " what are you talking about ? I'm surprised at you ! "

" I dare say you are, my dear." But he did not trouble to look at her. " You've got half an hour," he said to Medwin, " before we need start for the station. There's quite a good train at ten-fifteen, and you're travelling by it."

Medwin rose to his feet.

" May I ask why ? "

" Bertie ! " Barbara's voice was shrill. She could be ignored no longer. " If . . . if Aubrey goes, I shall go too."

" Don't say that, my dear," said Winterbrook mildly. " You'll frighten the poor fellow."

" May I ask—" repeated Medwin.

" You may," said Winterbrook. "And I'll tell you. I don't like you, Medwin. I don't like your face, your voice, or your manners." Remembering his beautiful *lychnis haageana*, the bereaved gardener could refrain from violence no longer. He shot out an arm, seized the young man by the collar of his coat, and marched him to the door. " Go and pack your things, my friend."

The door slammed behind Medwin ; and Winterbrook, coming back into the middle of the room, felt as though he had just taught Brake's six-year-old son the lesson he so much needed. Little beast. Destructive little beast. Ought not to be allowed at large.

" But, Bertie—"

He became aware of his wife again. Posed in a tragic attitude, she was waiting for him to speak to her. And he perceived, with the greatest possible satisfaction, that for the first time in her life she was frightened of him.

* * *

FINAL FLING

A visitor returning from France gave his word of honour that in Normandy he saw a grave bearing the following epitaph :

In memory of Maggie, a mule, who in her lifetime kicked 1 *colonel,* 1 *major,* 3 *lieutenants,* 11 *sergeants,* 27 *privates and* 1 *bomb.*

VALLEY OF THE WINDS

"That's where it plans its destruction," he said, "and it wants me alive"

by RAY BRADBURY

THE phone rang at six thirty that evening. It was December, and already dark as Thompson picked up the phone.

"Hello."

"Hello, *Herb?*"

"Oh, it's you, Allin."

"Is your wife at home, Herb?"

"Sure. Why?"

"Damn it."

Herb Thompson spoke into the receiver quietly. "What's up? You sound funny."

"I wanted you to come over tonight."

"We're having company."

"I wanted you to spend the night. When's your wife going away?"

"That's next week," said Thompson. "She'll be in Ohio for about nine days. Her mother's sick. I'll come over then."

"I wish you could come over tonight."

"Wish I could. Company and all, my wife'd kill me."

"I wish you could come over."

"What is it? The wind again?"

"Oh, no. No."

"Is it the wind?" asked Thompson.

The voice on the phone hesitated. "Yeah. Yeah, it's the wind."

"It's a clear night, there's not much wind."

"There's enough. It comes in the window and blows the curtains a little bit. Just enough to tell me."

"Look, why don't you come and spend the night here?" said Herb Thompson looking around the lighted hall.

"Oh, no. It's too late for that. It might catch me on the way over. It's a damned long distance, I wouldn't dare, but thanks, anyway. It's thirty miles, but thanks."

"Take a sleeping tablet."

"I've been standing in the door for the past hour, Herb. I can see it building up in the west. There are some clouds there and I

saw one of them kind of rip apart. There's a wind coming, all right."

"Well, you just take a nice sleeping tablet. And call me any time you want to call. Later this evening if you want."

"Any time?" said the voice on the phone.

"Sure."

"I'll do that, but I wish you could come out. Yet I wouldn't want you hurt. You're my best friend and I wouldn't want that. Maybe it's best to face this thing alone. I'm sorry I bother you."

"Hell, what's a friend for? Tell you what to do, sit down and get some writing done this evening," said Herb Thompson, shifting from one foot to the other in the hall. "You'll forget about the Himalayas and the Valley of the Winds and this preoccupation of yours with storms and hurricanes. Get another chapter done on your next travel book."

"I might do that. Maybe I will, I don't know. Maybe I will. I might do that. Thanks a lot for letting me bother you."

"Thanks, hell! Get off the line now, you. My wife's calling me to dinner."

Herb Thompson hung up.

He went and sat down at the supper table and his wife sat across from him. "Was that Allin?" she asked. He nodded. "Him and his winds that blow up and winds that blow down and winds that blow hot and blow cold," she said, handing him his plate heaped with food.

"He did have a time in the Himalayas, during the war," said Herb Thompson.

"You don't believe what he said about that valley, do you?"

"It makes a good story."

"Climbing around, climbing up things. Why do men climb mountains and scare themselves?"

"It was snowing," said Herb Thompson.

"Was it?"

"And raining and hailing and blowing all at once, in that valley. Allin's told me a dozen times. He tells it well. He was up pretty high. Clouds, and all. The valley made a noise."

"I *bet* it did," she said, sulkily.

"Like a lot of winds instead of just one. Winds from all over the world." He took a bite. "So says Allin."

"He shouldn't have gone there and looked, in the first place," she said. "You go poking around and first thing you know you get ideas. Winds start getting angry at you for intruding, and they follow you."

"Don't joke at him, he's my best friend," snapped Herb Thompson.

" It's all so silly ! "

" Nevertheless, he's been through a lot. That storm in Bombay, later, and the hurricane in the Pacific islands two months after that. And that time in Cornwall."

" I have no sympathy for a man who continually runs into wind storms and hurricanes, and then gets a persecution complex because of it."

The phone rang again.

" Don't answer it," she said.

" Maybe it's important."

" It's only Allin, again."

They sat there and the phone rang nine times and they didn't answer. Finally, it quieted. They finished dinner. Out in the kitchen, the curtains gently moved in a small breeze from a slightly opened window.

The phone rang again.

" I can't let it ring," he said, and answered it. " Oh, hello, Allin."

" Herb ! It's here ! It got here ! "

" You're too near the phone, back away a little."

" I stood in the open door and waited for it. I saw it coming down the highway, shaking all the trees, one by one, until it shook the trees just outside the house and it dived down towards the door and I slammed the door in its face ! "

Thompson didn't say anything. He couldn't think of anything to say, his wife was watching him in the hall door.

" How interesting," he said, at last.

" It's all around the house, Herb. I can't get out now, I can't do anything. But I fooled it, I let it think it had me, and just as it came down to get me I slammed and locked the door ! I was ready for it, I've been getting ready for weeks."

" Have you, now ; tell me about it, Allin, old man," Herb Thompson said jovially into the phone, while his wife looked on and his neck began to sweat.

" It began six weeks ago . . ."

" Oh, yes ? Well, well."

" . . . I thought I had it licked. I thought it had given up following and trying to get me. But it was just waiting. Six weeks ago I heard the wind laughing and whispering around the corners of my house, out here. Just for an hour or so, not very long, not very loud. Then it went away."

Thompson nodded into the phone. " Glad to hear it, glad to hear it." His wife stared at him.

" It came back, the next night. It slammed the shutters and [illegible]ks out of the chimney. It came back five nights in a row, a

little stronger each time. When I opened the front door, it came in at me and tried to pull me out, but it wasn't strong enough. Tonight it *is*."

"Glad to hear you're feeling better," said Thompson.

"I'm not better, what's wrong with you? Is your wife listening to us?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I see. I know I sound like a fool."

"Not at all. Go on."

Thompson's wife went back into the kitchen. He relaxed. He sat down on a little chair near the phone. "Go on, Allin, get it out of you, you'll sleep better."

"It's all around the house now, like a great big vacuum machine nuzzling at all the gables. It's knocking the trees around."

"That's funny, there's no wind *here*, Allin."

"Of course not, it doesn't care about you, only about me!"

"I guess that's one way to explain it."

"It's a killer, Herb, the biggest damnedest prehistoric killer that ever hunted prey. A big sniffling hound, trying to smell me out, find me. It pushes its big cold nose up to the house, taking air, and when it finds me in the parlour it drives its pressure there, and when I'm in the kitchen it goes there. It's trying to get in the windows, now, but I had them reinforced and I put new hinges on the doors, and bolts. It's a strong house. They built them strong in the old days. I've got all the lights in the house on, now. The house is all lit up, bright. The wind followed me from room to room, looking through all the windows, when I switched them on. Oh!"

"What's wrong?"

"It just snatched off the verandah door!"

"I wish you'd come over here and spend the night, Allin."

"I can't! God, I can't leave the house. I can't do anything. I know this wind, Lord, it's big and it's smart. I tried to light a cigarette a moment ago, and a little draught sucked the match out. The wind likes to play games, it likes to taunt me, it's taking its time with me, it's got all night. And now! God, right now, one of my old travel books, on the library table, I wish you could see it. A little breeze from God knows what small hole in the house has flipped the cover of the book open and the little breeze is—turning the pages one by one. I wish you could see it. There's my introduction. Do you remember the introduction to my Tibet book, Herb?"

"Yes."

[redacted] is dedicated to those who lost the game of elements [redacted] seen, but who has always escaped."

[redacted]

" Yes, I remember."

" The lights have gone out ! "

The phone crackled.

" The power lines just went down. Are you there, Herb ? "

" I still hear you."

" The wind got jealous of all that light in my house, it tore the power lines down. The telephone will probably go next. Oh, it's a real party, me and the wind, I tell you ! Just a second."

" Allin ? " A silence. Herb leaned against the mouthpiece. His wife glanced in from the kitchen. Herb Thompson waited. " Allin ? "

" I'm back," said the voice on the phone. " There was a draught from the door and I shoved some wadding under it to keep it from cooling my legs. I'm glad you didn't come out after all, Herb, I wouldn't want you in this mess. It just broke one of the living room windows and a regular gale is in the house, knocking pictures off the wall. Do you hear it ? "

Herb Thompson listened. There was a wild sirening on the phone and a whistling and banging. Allin shouted over it. " Do you hear it ? "

Herb Thompson swallowed drily. " I hear it."

" It wants me alive, Herb. It doesn't dare knock the house down in one fell blow. That'd kill me. It wants me alive, so it can pull me apart, finger by finger. It wants what's inside me. My mind, my brain. It wants my life-power, my psychic force, my ego. It wants intellect."

" My wife's calling me, Allin, I have to go and dry the dishes."

" It's a big cloud of vapours, winds from all over the world. The same wind that ripped the Celebes a year ago, the same pampero that killed in Argentina, the typhoon that fed well in Hawaii, and the hurricane that knocked the coast of Africa early this year. It's part of all those storms I escaped. It followed me from the Himalayas because it didn't want me to know what I know of it, the Valley of the Winds where it gathers and plans its destruction. Something, a long time ago, gave it a start in the direction of life. I know its feeding grounds, I know where it is born and where parts of it expire. For that reason, it hates me, for I have written books against it, telling how to defeat it. It doesn't want me preaching any more. It wants to incorporate me into its huge body, give it knowledge. It wants me on its own side ! "

" I have to hang up, Allin, my wife—"

" What ? " A pause, the blowing of the wind in the phone, distantly. " What did you say ? "

" Call me back in about an hour, Allin."

He hung up.

He went out to dry the dishes. His wife looked at him and he looked at the dishes, rubbing them with a towel.

" What's it like out tonight ? " he said.

" Nice. Not very chilly. Stars," she said. " Why ? "

" Nothing."

The phone rang three times in the next hour. At eight o'clock the company arrived, Stoddard and his wife. They sat around until eight-thirty talking and then got out and set up the card table and began to play.

Herb Thompson shuffled the cards over and over, with a clittering, shuttering effect and clapped them out, one at a time before the three other players. Talk went back and forth. He lit a cigar and made it into a fine grey ash at the tip, and adjusted his cards in his hand and on occasion lifted his head and listened. There was no sound outside the house. His wife saw him do this, and he cut it out immediately, and discarded a Jack of Clubs.

He puffed slowly on his cigar and they all talked quietly with occasionally small eruptions of laughter, and the clock in the hall sweetly chimed nine o'clock.

" Here we all are," said Herb Thompson, taking his cigar out and looking at it reflectively. " And life is sure funny."

" Eh ? " said Mr. Stoddard.

" Nothing, except here we are, living our lives, and somewhere else on earth a billion other people live their lives."

" That's a rather naïve statement."

" True, nevertheless. Life," he put his cigar back in his lips, " is a lonely thing. Even with married people. Sometimes when you're in a person's arms you feel a million miles away from them."

" I like *that*," said his wife.

" I didn't mean it that way," he explained, not with haste; because he felt no guilt, he took his time. " I mean we all believe what we believe and live our own little lives while other people live entirely different ones. I mean, we sit here in this room while a thousand people are dying. Some of cancer, some of pneumonia, some of tuberculosis. I imagine someone in the United States is dying right now in a motor crash."

" This isn't very stimulating conversation," said his wife.

" I mean to say, we all live and don't think about how other people think or live their lives or die. We wait until death comes *to* us. What I mean is here we sit, on our self-assured butt-bones, while, thirty miles away, in a big old house, completely surrounded by night and God-knows-what, one of the finest guys who ever lived is—"

" Herb ! "

He puffed and chewed on his cigar and stared blindly at his cards. "Sorry." He blinked rapidly and bit his cigar. "Is it my turn?"

"It's your turn."

The play went round the table, with a fluttering of cards, murmurs, conversation, laughter. Herb Thompson sank lower into his chair and began to look ill.

The phone rang. Thompson jumped and ran to it and jerked it off the hook.

"Herb! I've been calling and calling."

"I couldn't answer, my wife wouldn't let me."

"What's it like at your house, Herb?"

"What do you mean, what's it like?"

"Has the company come?"

"Hell, yes, it has—"

"Are you talking and laughing and playing cards?"

"Damn it, yes, but what has that got to do with—"

"Are you smoking your ten-cent cigar?"

"Yes, but . . ."

"Swell," said the voice on the phone, enviously. "That sure is swell. I wish I could be there. I wish I didn't know the things I know. I wish lots of things."

"Are you all right?"

"So far, so good. I'm locked in the kitchen now. The front wall of the house just blew in. But I've planned my retreat. When the kitchen door gives, I'm heading for the cellar. If I'm lucky I may hold out there until morning. It'll have to tear the whole damned house down to get to me, and the cellar floor is pretty solid. I have a shovel and I may dig—deeper . . ."

It sounded like a lot of other voices on the phone.

"What's *that?*" Herb Thompson demanded, cold, shivering.

"That?" asked the voice on the phone. "Those are the voices of ten thousand killed in a typhoon, seven thousand killed by a hurricane, three thousand buried by a cyclone. Am I boring you? It's a long list. That's what the wind is, you know. It's a lot of spirits, a lot of people dead. The wind killed them and took their intellects, their spirits, to give itself intelligence. It took all their voices and made them into one voice. Interesting, isn't it? All those millions of peoples killed in the past centuries, twisted and tortured and taken from continent to continent on the backs and in the bellies of monsoons and whirlwinds. I get very poetic at a time like this."

The phone echoed and rang with voices and shouts and whinings.

"Come on back, Herb," said his wife, at the card table.

"That's how the wind gets more intelligent each year, it adds to its intellect, body by body, life by life, death by death."

" We're waiting for you, Herb," called his wife.

" Damn it ! " he turned, almost snarling. " Wait just a moment, won't you ! " Back to the phone. " Allin, if you want me to come out there now, I will, if you need help."

" Wouldn't think of it. This is a grudge fight, wouldn't do to have you in it. Well, I'd better hang up. The kitchen door looks very weak and I'll have to get into the cellar."

" Call me back, later ? "

" Maybe, if I'm lucky. I don't think I'll make it this time. I slipped away and escaped in the Celebes that time, but I think it has me now. I hope I haven't bothered you too much, Herb."

" You haven't bothered anyone, damn it. Call me back."

" I'll try . . ."

Herb Thompson went back to the card game. His wife glared at him. " How's Allin, your friend ? " she asked. " Is he sober ? "

" He's never taken a drink in his life," said Thompson sullenly, sitting down. " I should have gone out there earlier."

" But he's called every night for six weeks and you've been out there at least ten nights to sleep with him and everything was all right."

" He needs help. He might hurt himself."

" You were out there two nights ago; you can't always be running after him."

" First thing in the morning I'll move him into a nursing home. Didn't want to. He seems so reasonable, so sane."

They played out the games. At ten-thirty coffee was served. Herb Thompson drank his slowly, looking at the phone. I wonder if he's in the cellar now, he thought.

Herb Thompson walked to the phone, called long-distance, put through a call.

" I'm sorry," said the operator. " The lines are down in that district. As soon as the lines have been repaired, we will put your call through."

" Then the telephone lines *are* down ! " cried Thompson, slamming down the phone. Turning, he ran down the hall, opened the cupboard, pulled out his hat and coat. " Excuse me," he shouted. " You *will* excuse me, won't you ? I'm sorry," he said, to his amazed guests and his wife with the coffee urn in her hand.

"Herb!" she cried. " I've got to get out there ! " he said, in return.

He slipped into his coat.

There was a soft, faint stirring at the door.

Everybody in the room tensed and straightened up.

" Who could that be ? " asked his wife.

The soft stirring was repeated, very quietly.

Thompson hurried down the hall where he stopped, alert.

Outside, faintly, he heard laughter.

" I'll be damned," said Thompson. He put his hand on the door-knob, pleasantly shocked and relieved. " I'd know that laugh anywhere. It's Allin. He came on over in his car, after all. Couldn't wait until morning to tell me his confounded tall tales." Thompson chuckled weakly. " Probably brought some friends with him. Sounds like a lot of other people . . ."

He opened the front door.

The verandah was empty.

Thompson showed no surprise, his face grew amusedly sly. He laughed. " Allin ? None of your tricks now ! Come on." He switched on the verandah light and peered out and around. " Where are you, Allin ? Come on, now."

A little breeze blew into his face.

Thompson waited a moment, suddenly chilled to his marrow. He stepped out of the door and looked uneasily about, very carefully.

A sudden wind caught and whipped his coat flaps, dishevelled his hair.

He thought he heard laughter again. The wind suddenly rounded the house and was a pressure everywhere at once, and then, storming for a full minute, passed on.

The wind died down, sad, mourning in the high trees, passing away ; going back out to the sea, to the Celebes, to the Ivory Coast, to Sumatra and Cape Horn, to Cornwall and the Philippines. Fading, fading, fading.

Thompson stood there, cold. He went in and closed the door and leaned against it, and didn't move, eyes closed.

" What's wrong . . . ? " asked his wife.

* * *

SOLUTION to ARGOSY CROSSWORD on page 144

Across. 1, Apricot. 5, Impasse. 10, Wind up. 11, Signal. 12, Ruins. 13, Lessee. 14, Entity. 15, Booths. 17, Serene. 19, Ado. 20, Aplomb. 22, Catchy. 23, Stager. 25, Sphinx. 27, Exact. 28, Strata. 29, Lazily. 30, Princes. 31, Idolist.

Down. 2, Prize competitor. 3, Indus. 4, Oppress. 6, Mussels. 7, Argot. 8, Starting handles. 9, This modern age. 16, Too. 18, Rat. 21, Bereave. 22, Castled. 24, Grain. 26, Hazel.

MY KINGDOM . . . !

He doth nothing but talk of his horse . . .

The Merchant of Venice

My horse is no beauty. He has too many humps and hollows, as well as flat sides, a rat's tail, and front teeth like an Englishwoman's. But I have a soft spot for him. I can't get over his staying in my service, letting himself be driven to and fro without a murmur.

Each time I put him in the shafts, I expect him to say No, with a decisive jerk, and throw over the traces.

Not he. He lowers and raises his big head as though trying on a smart hat, and backs quietly between the shafts.

Besides, I don't stint his oats and maize. I brush him till his coat shines like a cherry. I comb his mane, I plait his scanty tail. With hand and voice I flatter him. I sponge his eyes, I polish his hooves.

Is he touched by these attentions ?

I don't know . . .

JULES RENARD, *Hunting With 'The Fox'*,
translated by T. W. Earp and G. W. Stonier

Plough Horses

Their conquering hooves which trod the stubble down
Were ritual which turned the field to brown,
And their great hulks were seraphim of gold,
Or mute ecstatic monsters on the mould.

And oh, the rapture when, one furrow done,
They marched broad-breasted to the sinking sun !
The light flowed off their bossy sides in flakes,
The furrows rolled behind like struggling snakes . . .

EDWIN MUIR, *Horses*

St. Mawr

In the inner dark she saw a handsome bay horse with his clean ears pricked like daggers from his naked head as he swung handsomely round to stare at the open doorway. He had big, black, brilliant eyes, with a sharp questioning glint, and that air of tense, alert quietness which betrays an animal that can be dangerous.

" Is he quiet ? " Lou asked.

" Why—yes—my Lady ! He's quiet, with those that know

how to handle him. *Cup! my boy! Cup my beauty! Cup then! St. Mawr!*"

Loquacious even with the animals, he went softly forward and laid his hand on the horse's shoulder, soft and quiet as a fly settling. Lou saw the brilliant skin of the horse crinkle a little in apprehensive anticipation, like the shadow of the descending hand on a bright red-gold liquid. But then the animal relaxed again.

"Quiet with those that know how to handle him, and a bit of a ruffian with those that don't." . . .

She looked at the glowing bay horse that stood there with his ears back, his face averted, but attending as if he were some lightning conductor. He was a stallion. When she realised this, she became more afraid of him . . .

"Has he ever made a break?" she asked, apprehensive.

"Made a break?" replied the man. "Well, if I must admit it, he's had two accidents. Mr. Griffith Edwards' son rode him a bit wild, away there in the forest of Deane, and the young fellow had his skull smashed in, against a low oak bough. Last Autumn, that was. And some time back, he crushed a groom against the side of the stall—injured him fatally. But they were both accidents, my Lady. Things will happen." . . .

"May I say *how do you do*?" she said to the horse drawing a little nearer in her white, summery dress, and lifting her hand that glittered with emeralds and diamonds.

He drifted away from her, as if some wind blew him. Then he ducked his head, and looked sideways at her, from his black, full eye.

"I think I'm all right," she said, edging nearer, while he watched her.

She laid her hand on his side, and gently stroked him. Then she stroked his shoulder, and then the hard, tense arch of his neck. And she was startled to feel the vivid heat of his life come through to her, through the lacquer of red-gold gloss. So slippery with vivid, hot life! . . .

She wanted to buy St. Mawr.

D. H. LAWRENCE, 1885-1930, *St. Mawr*

Consul-Elect

Caligula . . . *loved* Prasinus *the Cochman so wel, that for good wil to the master, he bid his horse to supper, gave him wine to drink in cups of estate, set barly graines of golde before him to eate, and swore by no bugs, that hee would make him a Consul: which thing* (*saith* Dion) *had bin performed, had hee not bin prevented by suddain death.*

STEPHEN GOSSON, 1554-1624, *The Schoole of Abuse*

A Room With A View

Florence Nightingale to Douglas Galton, 4th June, 1863 :

> I do not speak from hearsay but from actual personal acquaintance with horses of the most intimate kind. And I assure you they tell me it is of the utmost consequence to their health and spirits when in the loose box to have a window to look out of. A small bull's eye will do. I have told Dr. Sutherland but he has no feeling.

On this letter Dr. Sutherland scribbled :

> We *have* provided such a window and every horse can see out if he chooses to stand on his hind legs with his fore feet against the wall. It is the least exertion he can put himself to.

CECIL WOODHAM SMITH, *Florence Nightingale*

The Stallion

Round by the black barn and the shrunken pond,
Now treading slow, now sidling proudly on,
Through warm air startled by his eager neigh
The Suffolk stallion cleaves his stately way.

His body gleaming firm as moulded bronze,
His feathered fetlocks plumed with silken gold,
His belted tail, thick mane, with ribands blent,
He strides to mate his mares, magnificent.

The deep expectant eyes shine mildly bright,
The rich flanks quiver, stiff the great neck curves,
Faster the mighty head throws toss and fling
When stabled mares whinny their welcoming.

With dull and sullen face, thin buskined legs,
Leading his charge in apathy and ease,
A dusty groom plods wearily beside
This majesty of limb, this fruitful pride.

CLAUDE COLLEER ABBOTT

Living Close To Nature

Go anywhere in England where there are natural, wholesome, contented, and really nice English people ; and what do you always find ? That the stables are the real centre of the household.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, *Heartbreak House*, 1917

RAIN FOREST

"I'm not much good at thinking, sir," said Heavy

by DOROTHY COTTRELL

HEAVY BAILEAUX stood at the rail of the little gunboat and looked at the seascape you could never quite believe, where from crimson water the flippers of soup turtles rose and sank lazily as from the palm-thick shores and eucalyptus-jungled hills of the island the white birds took off for the wine and purple mountains of the mainland. It was as unreal as if the birds were embroidered on a purple and crimson scarf stitched in jungle green and gold. It gave him a catch inside. Especially the birds that were like sparks of snow and white flowers, and, yet somehow like wicked and merry gnomes, bead-eyed, expressive-crested, companionable yet unknowable; so beautiful that his big, blunt fingers hungered to touch the shining feathers, to tickle the tilting crests. He wanted a cockatoo for a pet; wanted it so much that his broken-nosed face and all his large, ex-pugilist's frame expressed his longing.

In imagination he saw the cockatoo that he might have had if the Old Man had not objected to pets. Like the imperial birds passing overhead, it would be a big white cockatoo, sulphur-crested, jolly-eyed, imperturbable yet winsome. Mentally—and after considerable thought—he had named it Cocky. He would teach it things. It would know him so that it would fluff the lovely crest and climb on the bars of its cage at his approach.

Often it could come out of its cage and play about the messroom. He'd see it didn't bother the other men. When he went ashore on leave, Cocky could ride on his shoulder and people would exclaim at the bird's beauty. Though he didn't drink or even smoke, he would take it into bars in Sydney and London and Singapore and let it do tricks for the admiration of the men. And no one had better hurt Cocky by offering him a lighted match or anything like that! But then they wouldn't. He, Heavy, wasn't good with words because they came out dull off his tongue and he wasn't smart enough to play games, but he was just so big and so obviously an ex-prizefighter that no one would fool with Cocky while he was around!

Maybe, sometimes as Cocky rode on his shoulder, the fat and feathered cheek of the bird would lightly touch his own cheek, indicating comradeship and mutual enjoyment . . . But that was just a dream. He couldn't have a cockatoo. The Old Man wouldn't have " damned birds " on board. Yet otherwise the Old Man was so decent that Heavy didn't want to change ship. He was as proud of the ship and of its survey work as the Old Man himself was. The Old Man had commanded a ship of the line but had asked for the survey assignment. Because of the survey work they went into wonderful places where regular naval craft wouldn't go. And the Old Man himself was a sort of defence to Heavy . . .

Not that the other men disliked Heavy. They just knew he wasn't smart except at his work, and—good temperedly—they made him the ship's joke. Like getting him to repeat things that tied him up—then laughing because he got more tied. Well, once the Old Man, who was fat but could move very quietly, had come on the baiting and he had said, " Baileaux ! Go to the bridge and get my pipe ! " The Old Man had rather prominent eyes, heavy pink jowls and a rather pouting expression, but his face could look fine in a hurricane. And as Heavy said, " Yes, Sir ! " and went, the Old Man had said things to the men in a voice that cut like a knife with its anger.

" You bloody swine ! " the Old Man's low voice had said, thinking Heavy couldn't hear. " Think yourselves funny do you ? You'd all cheer your damned heads off when he was champion, wouldn't you ? When he was getting this way for your amusement ? Well, he's still more of a man than the bunch of you rolled into one ! . . . What do most of you do with your spare time anyway ? Get drunk and pick up a cutie and be a damned trouble to the Service, that's what ! . . . Well Heavy didn't. He looked after his mother and five kid brothers. Sent the boys to decent schools, set them all up. Then he got married—to a damned sweet girl—and had a little nipper of his own."

The Old Man's voice stopped a minute. " Had a little cottage for them while he was in the Service in the war . . . Well, when he got back, there was just a bare place where the cottage had been. The bombers had been there. No one ever found his wife or the kid. That made him—well, a bit more the way he is ! . . . And if anyone on this ship ever notices the way he is again, he'll deal with me, that's what ! Understand ? "

Heavy hadn't even known the Old Man knew about Maggie or Billy or about how the crowd cheered when you were champ. Nothing was ever said about any of it between him and the Old Man, but Heavy belonged to the Old Man for life—and it was only a man new to the ship who ever ragged him now. The only near approach to ever saying anything was once when Heavy was carrying the

Old Man's fishing rods. The Old Man liked to have him when he went fishing because Heavy didn't talk unless he was talked to.

Well, the Old Man was winding in the line one day at the end of some cliff fishing. Out of nowhere, he looked at the sea and said, " Fishing's a good anaesthetic, you know, Baileaux! Took it up after my fiancée was killed . . . Fine seat on a horse she had. Did a lot of riding together when we were youngsters. She was killed in a fall a week before we were to be married. Twenty years ago that was."

So that was how the Old Man knew how Heavy felt about Maggie. Heavy did extra shining on the metal parts of the fishing gear after that.

There! There came the final flight of cockatoos from the island now! And the sunset was so strong that now their snow was stained with pink . . . He certainly hated men shooting the cockatoos! But the orange growers on the mainland said they spoiled the groves and the farmers said they spoiled the crops, so he guessed it couldn't be helped. But he would dearly like to have been able to have one of them! He bet it would have got to know him good as you please!

Behind him, the Old Man said of the clamouring birds, " Infernal, squawking things! . . . Get the tackle and the butterfly net in order, Baileaux! Tomorrow we're going fishing and collecting 'flies."

Heavy had spun and saluted, with smiles all over his battered face. He said, " Yes, sir! "

" And get that grin off your face! " the Old Man said. This was part of their private comradeship. It was like an affectionate master playfully slapping a big dog so it wagged.

The leeward side of the island was white beaches fringed with red-racemed umbrella trees and with coconut palms, then more or less open forests of eucalyptus trees and giant paper-barks. The windward side was orchid-covered cliffs and the towering mat of the rain forest that had a bad reputation with captains because seamen were said to have used it to jump ship. Even with the shelter of the Barrier Reef that lay eastward beyond the horizon, the surf was strong on the windward shore, and the Old Man sent the launch back to the ship from the last sheltered bay to the north. Then Heavy and the Old Man worked their way along the rocks until they reached a place of grey cliffs and lumpy orchid roots, where they could cast into the green water beyond the surf.

The day sparkled and Heavy saw tiny humming birds whose eggs must be smaller than peas, while on the darkness of the rain forest that towered towards the mountain were the white sparks

of cockatoos. But the fishing was poor. So after the picnic lunch, the Old Man—who didn't like catching butterflies but did it as a duty to the British Museum—got out the net and the cyanide jar and they went after the huge emerald-green and black butterflies of the island. The Old Man also wanted a special fern for his sister in England. And the best ferns were said to be on the central peak which was usually approached from the leeward bay. But the Old Man said, " We should be able to get through from here ! "

So with Heavy carrying the fishing rods, they worked their way up a small stream. And Heavy saw a scrub turkey mound where the mother birds covered their eggs and let the heat of the fermenting leaves hatch them, but he didn't like to mention it to the Old Man. And at first the grassy banks of the stream were open and trailed with maiden-hair ferns and there were glossy staghorn ferns on the rocks and tree trunks. Then the pink-fruited figs pressed closer and tree-ferns made a roof of pale green fronds and then the great tree-trunks pressed in so that the stream was a winding aisle through a cathedral and there were only tiny patches of sky, high up between interlocking branches.

Big lianas coiled up the trees and looped thorny and living ropes across the stream-bed and the ferns here were almost ivory-coloured while in places the dead leaves were three feet thick. And the stream bottom was so slippery that the Old Man spent a good deal of time sitting down without meaning to. The smell of clean mould came up as they trod on the leaves and water pressed out of the leaves even where these were banked high.

And all the time they were climbing, and the Old Man puffed but kept going gamely, while Heavy was glad that his own wind was still good. Then the stream began to run through a dark gorge, its rock walls not five feet apart and blotched with the creamy-pale ferns and rosy mosses lifting little ruby sparks.

" Wonder if the damned thing comes out of the mountain ? " the Old Man said of the stream.

Water ran down the cliffs on either side of them and the light was so slight you had to look hard to see where you were stepping. Then with a final squeeze where the water ran above their knees and where the Old Man had to go sideways, the gorge widened into a basin. Overhead was a roof of great branches, dead leaves and living leaves and small, pale roots of the things that had grown on the leaves. And the hair-like mats of the Devil vine made whispy mattresses. Light came palely from the top of the cliff ahead, down which the stream fell as a waterfall.

" Spooky, damned spot ! " the Old Man said. He looked back down the gorge. " Damned if I'm going to fall back down that

infernal stream! My bottom won't be the same as it is . . . See any way up, Baileaux?"

Heavy said, "Looks as if we might get up where that little stream comes down to port, sir."

"Looks as if *you* might, you mean!" the Old Man said.

Heavy said, "Shall I try it, sir?"

The first twenty feet were easy, then he really had to climb and at the top he struck a sort of cliff of dead leaves, perhaps five feet deep. When he tried to get up it, an avalanche of dead leaves and wet leaf mould laced with feathery roots fell over him and over the Old Man, who swore.

"Will I come down, sir?" Heavy said.

"Enough's come down already! Keep going!" the Old Man said.

By dint of burrowing, Heavy got hold of a big root and managed to shin up it to the top of the leaves. Water squashed out of them as he sat on them. Peering through the gloom, he could just see that between him and the continuation of the main stream was an entangled mass of lianas and fallen trees, but it looked as if they could work round this through the forest that was different here because the tree branches began closer to the ground.

He reported, climbed down, and with the Old Man clawing and Heavy boosting him from behind they both reached the top. The forest floor was like waves of the sea for it rolled up round every tree and sank to troughs between the trees. Beyond the lianas and the fallen trees, a ten-foot-high hurricane-wash of oozing earth continued to cut them off from the stream.

Heavy said, "I've heard tell from bird hunters there's sometimes false floors in these forests, sir. So a man can go through what seems good ground like . . ."

The Old Man said, "Poppycock!"

They moved south beside the wash, through the leaden light that rayed level with the ground from the greater openness of the stream-course. Heavy kept trying the footing, but you couldn't tell because everywhere was the same great, spongy cushion of foot-deep moss, velvety puffball fungus and wet leaves. And everywhere the same low and limby forest stretched away; the liana stalks, with which every tree was draped, looking like great snakes, some thick as a man's leg.

Overhead, more dead leaves and patches of ferns and fungus clotted the massed Devil vine that was sickly from lack of light. Then the light was getting stronger and above them was a break in the trees, like a leafy light-shaft reaching up to the forest-top with leaves that showed green and a peep hole of sky from around which the curious heads of white cockatoos looked down at them.

One snowy bird even clambered down a banyan aerial the better to see what they were doing, his crest opening and shutting like a strange, sulphur-hearted flower . . .

Suddenly there was a yell from the Old Man and the angle of the leaf-floor under Heavy's feet altered sharply so that he felt as if he was sliding down a wet haystack. Over his shoulder, he had a glimpse of the Old Man's hand disappearing into a hole from which spores of powder fungus drifted up. He heard muffled tearings and crackings in the leaves, a showering sound, a dull thump from below. Then the leaves under him gave way like a rotten thatch and he too was falling in a choking shower of muddy leaf mould into darkness and rank dampness where he landed as if on a not too springy feather bed.

He had kept his grip on the fishing rods. Water, dirt and leaves continued to rain over him. About him was darkness and space. His eyes were smarting. He gasped, " Are you all right, sir ? "

A yard away, the Old Man's voice said, " Certainly ! Nothing more than a broken ankle ! Always enjoy hundred foot falls ! "

Actually, Heavy thought, looking up at the rift in the mass above them, they had probably fallen about twenty feet. Everything was wet, but enough puffball fungus had been burst to shower the air with strangling dust. The puffballs didn't seem to absorb water and as they aged they were like containers of snuff. He choked, " Your ankle . . . is it broken . . . sir ? " The Old Man's figure wasn't a good one for tumbling.

" Yes," the Old Man coughed. " How's the cyanide jar ? Got the torch ? "

The cyanide jar was all right, but the torch had fallen from its sling on his belt. " Better not move around too much, sir ! " he muttered. " They do say you can fall through the false floors in these rain forests."

" So I gathered," the Old Man said.

Heavy's groping hand found the torch. Its yellow beam jumped into the gloom and they saw the nature of the place into which they had fallen. To the west, towards the mountain, was a sheer rock wall, to north and east were also rocks, but with an overhang towards the top. To the south, a dark fissure stretched away. Everywhere water dripped and glistened.

" Get around a hundred and thirty inches of rain a year," the Old Man said. " Suppose something damp has to happen."

Some twenty feet above them was the underside of the roof of rotted leaves and webbed roots. From this roof to the floor of more ancient leaf mould extended roots ; stringy roots of trees, transparent pink roots of succulents, wiry roots of long-buried ferns, the remains of old liana ropes. But between these identifiable

underpinnings of the forest were incalculable, pallid and unidentifiable roots like inverted and draped seaweeds; ivory, ghost-white, faintly pink, rust brown; flattened, feathered and patterned as seaweeds, forming a vast drapery of living stalactites wherever the torch-beam turned.

"Damned, unpleasant looking spot!" the Old Man said. "Better not waste the torch, Baileaux! May need it." He was taken with sneezing. "Got a pocket knife?"

"Must have fell out, sir," Heavy said, groping. "I'll find it."

"Stop stirring up puffball dust a minute! We've got to think."

"Yes, sir," Heavy said.

"How thick do you think that infernal thatch is?"

Heavy estimated carefully on his fingers. "Maybe three feet where we came through. Maybe ten feet near the walls. It's sort of rolled up there, sir."

"H'mm. That's what I was afraid of," the Old Man said. "Suppose it does form like they say. Forest grows and branches, lianas and Devil vine make a net. Leaves fall on the net—and the damned thing roots and grows again! . . . This was probably a sink hole—that's why there's a gap in the forest above it . . . Give me the torch!" He shone the beam economically upward. "Aren't any lianas or roots under the part we came through. That's going to put us up against ten feet of digging from below if we reach the blamed ceiling! But best chance of getting up is by the roots and lianas or the rocks. Try the roots and lianas first! I don't think they'll carry you."

"We'll soon see, sir," Heavy said heartily.

"Put the cyanide jar where you won't fall on it!" The Old Man got to his hands and knees and swore as his ankle caught him. "And watch where you're falling! Could be two or three floors to these things. Little enough air here . . . I'll take a crawl round the place then keep looking for the knife."

Heavy moved carefully, treating himself to a last glance at the little patch of sky. Up there the wind was blowing and the cockatoos on the tree tops saw the blue freedom of the Coral Sea and the bald grey crags of the island and the lilac mountains of Australia under the pink, tropic clouds . . . Here, now that his eyes were used to it, he could just make out dripping shapes.

The springiness under his feet was uncomfortable and he'd a notion he could hear water running somewhere way down below, but nothing gave. He drew together some of the more promising roots and draped liana stems. The liana stems were dead though their legions of down-bent hooks were seemingly unaffected by the years of rotting darkness. No matter how carefully he gripped them, they got him agonizingly. But Maggie hadn't liked a man

to swear, and he put his foot into a place where the lianas crossed The dead lianas broke as the roots tore free and he crashed in a scatter of thorns and débris. And at once the powdery fungus dust that was irritating as snuff began to fall.

" ' Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze . . .' " the Old Man said. Heavy knew that this was meant to be a joke and he laughed dutifully. But this was a mistake for earwigs fell into his mouth. Above them the whole netted mess shook and rained its mud, leaf fragments and life. Earwigs were all over him.

Nothing else would even begin to carry him. The dead lianas broke as soon as he put his weight on them. The living roots were too frail to be of use. Even in the ghost of light the Old Man's face showed purple with his choking as he crawled back from the south. " Isn't going to work, is it ? " the Old Man asked.

" I'll keep trying, sir," Heavy said.

" Bulldog breed," the Old Man said. " All that sort of thing . . . Isn't going to work ! No way up the rocks either. A centipede couldn't get through the fissure—and not much chance it would be better off if it did! . . . Sit down and let's think!" Heavy sat down and the blood from the thorn cuts ran streakily down his arms and ankles.

He could see the Old Man was in a lot of pain. He said cheeringly, " They'll be looking for us when we don't show up at the beach, sir."

" Naturally," the Old Man said and grinned. " They'll look along the windward shore first then they'll look along the currents for floating bodies on the assumption we've been drowned and that I, at least, will surface nicely. They'll climb the peak and look over the jungle with glasses for smoke signals. They'll send search parties to fire shots and listen for us calling for help. They won't see any signals and they won't hear any calls for help—and they won't find this darn hole, Baileaux. And we both know it ! "

Heavy chilled and yet glowed to the words. It was bad to be trapped. But it was good the Old Man talked to him like this. He was, he knew, the only seaman the Old Man would have talked to like this. He said, " Well, we'll just have to get out, sir."

The Old Man's voice had its inner laugh. " *He* didn't ! "

" Pardon, sir ? "

The Old Man flashed the torch into the fissure of the rock some twenty feet away and held it steady as Heavy felt his hair rise on his great neck. In the cleft of the rocks, leaning partly against them in a sort of gesture of last appeal was the white-picked skeleton of a man. " Found him a while ago," the Old Man said. Near the little bones of the skeleton's feet were queer, twisted lumps of something.

" You think he's an Aboriginal, sir ? " Heavy asked, steadying his voice to the proper tone of impersonal curiosity. The Old Man shook his head. " One of the sailors who ' jumped ship ' on the island ! That's what's left of his boots near his feet."

" Poor chap ! " Heavy whispered. " The poor chap ! " The light from the shaft in the forest was going and he got to his feet. " I'd better get busy, sir ! Got to get you to a doctor ! "

The Old Man's voice was kind. " We'd better cross off what we can't do, Baileaux—then see what we can . . . Let's suppose a search party comes up the stream. It's unlikely, but they might. They'd keep firing shots. We might hear 'em—but would they hear us ? Try a yell, Baileaux ! "

Heavy yelled towards the small aperture in the ceiling. Fungus dust drifted down and extra water dripped, but it was as if he had yelled into a wet feather mattress. The masses of sound proofing above them absorbed his voice.

" They wouldn't hear it, not above the stream," the Old Man said. " Starting around four hours from now—when they could be near here if they come near here—we'll take turns yelling every ten minutes. They won't hear it except by a miracle, but we had better not overlook miracles. If that last shipment of batteries had been any darned good we might have done something shining the torch on the tree tops—though it wouldn't show far. Apart from that, we couldn't set fire to the stuff up there even if we could take the risk of being burned to death or smothered by smoke. You might as well try to set fire to the water in the bath ! . . .

" We could make a bundle of some of our clothes—though they're damned wet !—tie the fish rods together and fire the clothes with lighter fluid and poke them up through the roof. The chance against anyone seeing it's around a million to one. But if ever we do hear a shot, we can try it. Or if we tried it in daylight with leaves on top for smoke, there's the chance that someone on the peak, looking at exactly the right bit of the island just as the smoke went up—if it ever did go up through the tree tops—would see it . . .

" Still, we've got to be rational about it! It's rather less likely they'd see than that a man will draw thirteen of a suit at bridge . . . We can try tying two of the fishing rods together with a hook on the end made out of the net frame. Then try to claw down the roof until we strike something that might carry us—then try to get a sinker on a line over that, then try to pull a rope made of the rest of the lines and our clothes over after it ! "

It took a long while because they couldn't find the knife. It didn't work because the hook was too blunt and weak and the rods too pliant.

" Got to do better than that ! " the Old Man said.

The darkness was absolute now; black and choking as if a man was being crushed in velvet. "I'm not good at thinking, sir," Heavy said. "Except about birds. I do sort of know what birds will do . . ." He checked himself, knowing it dangerous ground. But the Old Man did not explode. Instead, he said, "Go and check how the loose stones are along the base of the cliff!"

Under the leaf mould drifts, there were a good many stones. There was also the poor chap with the remains of his shoes by the surprisingly little bones of his feet. Heavy reported, "Fair lot of stones, sir."

"Well, we may as well amuse ourselves," the Old Man said. "If we can stack enough stones against the sheer part of the rock and keep building them up we may get something we can reach the roof from. Whether we can get through depends on how close that hurricane wash is. We don't want an earth slide on top of us! It's worth trying!" The Old Man got on to his hands and knees and began to crawl towards the cliff base.

Heavy said, "Your ankle . . ." But the old Man kept on crawling and working the stones along until they were against the place where the rocks didn't overhang. From the hole in the roof the little draught of night air came down. They worked steadily for perhaps an hour. Then rested while the Old Man smoked a cigarette and Heavy chewed a twig.

As they were having their pause for a cigarette and a twig at three in the morning there was a sudden little jar. They listened, it came again, more in the flesh than audible to the ear. The Old Man said, "Those are shots!"

They yelled. The soundproofing of the trap swallowed the sound of their voices. "Light the clothes!" the Old Man said.

Heavy took the bundled clothes carefully, knowing he must not hurry just because the clothes might mean hearing men's voices and seeing the lights of the ship and having coffee in the messroom with a big plate of eggs, fried golden brown and curly round the edges but still soft inside the yellows, and slices and slices of smoky bacon and big slices of bread . . . He made his hands be careful with the lighter fluid and careful so as not to damp the matches. Pushed up on the poles, the bundle flared blue and he could even see—high up—the roof of the forest. But the moment the lighter fluid burned out, the clothes went out too. You could just smell burned alcohol.

They listened—and shouted—and listened. Then, once again, they heard the little shock of sound—and it was farther away.

"Too bad!" the Old Man said. "They didn't see either of 'em! If the damned clothes had caught . . . but we'd better

keep the rest of the fluid to try for smoke in the day." They went back to rolling stones.

At four in the morning, after they had their rest, the Old Man said, " We'd better take watches. You get some sleep ! " When Heavy protested, he said, " That's an order ! "

Heavy hadn't known how tired he was until his head hit the leaf mould, then in spite of scratches and bites and the things that ran over him, he was asleep. When the Old Man woke him, he could see the opening in the trees again, far, far above, and the paleness of the blue sky against the dark green of the leaves. While the Old Man rested, Heavy went on working at the pile of stones that was quite respectable now. But stones were getting scarcer. He had to crawl long distances to get them and dig deep in the mould. Also the mould was pressing down under the weight of the pile.

At noon, the Old Man said, " We'll try a smoke. They're sure to have a man on the peak by now."

Heavy re-fixed the bundle of clothes with leaves on top to make it smoke, and they used the last of the lighter fluid. The bundle burned rather better this time and enough frail smoke drifted up through the leafy gap in the jungle to excite the white cockatoos. Then the clothes went out. They would not be able to try fire again. They listened until the sound of dripping water hurt their ears, but there was no other sound. At four o'clock, the Old Man said, " No go. They didn't see it."

By five o'clock there were no more stones, but the precarious pile was high enough for a man standing on it to be able to reach the thatch with the strongest section of the big rod, which would let Heavy use the poor hook with more effect.

Heavy arranged a last stone on the pyramid and climbed. The Old Man yelled, " Look out ! " And Heavy jumped clear as the pile of stones went towards its own middle with a clattering and muffled rumble followed by a rush and a great splash that was a long way down. From the dark and earthy hole where the stones had been the sounds of trickling water came clearly. " Nasty spot ! " the Old Man said, wiping his face. " We're better off on the second floor than in the basement ! "

By shining the torch down, they could see a black, sheer-sided pool way down at the bottom of the sink hole. Little trickles and oozes of water dropped into it.

The floor under the original gap in the thatch was still solid. Far, far up, they could see the bright eyes and lifting and falling crests of cockatoos against the patch of blue sky.

Heavy said, " Sir . . . "

" Yes ? " the Old Man said.

" Birds is very curious," Heavy said. " Especially cockatoos."

" Interesting," the Old Man said through his sneezing.

" Sir, if I tied my handkerchief to two of the fishing rods tied together and poked it up through the hole, I think, maybe, a cockatoo would come down to see what it was . . . They do sort of look at everything, sir . . ."

" A pity ! " the Old Man said. " Fine man before he went insane, but it's happened ! " He turned purple. " We're stuck in a damned infernal grave and can't even die decently for sneezing —and he thinks a cockatoo might come down to look at an infernal handkerchief . . ." He passed into language that even Heavy had never heard before. That brought on worse sneezing.

When things got quiet, Heavy said, " If he comes down, I just might be able to slip a noose of line over his head." He rushed the explanation. " You see, sir, they're so curious, he'll be looking at the handkerchief and trying it in his beak and his hand . . ."

The Old Man's eyes bulged but this time he was so busy trying not to sneeze again that he couldn't say what he thought. His eyes just rolled. " If I got a noose over his head, I could pull him down . . ." Heavy charged on.

" Doubtless teach him to speak in time ! " the Old Man strangled.

" Then I could tie the handkerchief to him and reel him out on the fish line—it seems sort of cruel to frighten him that way, but it wouldn't really hurt him. And there'd be no risk of his starving. In time, he'd bite the line through. But first he'd go back to the top of the trees and flutter and try to fly and he'd yell good and loud. No one might ever see but someone might."

The Old Man stared at him for a long time. " Most cockeyed thing I ever heard of ! Try it ! "

Heavy took out his purple silk handkerchief with the yellow and red spots and his plain red silk handkerchief. The Old Man didn't say anything. " The purple one is sort of prettiest but the red one shows more . . ."

" Either should do the work," the Old Man said. " Should both kill a respectable bird at first look ! "

Heavy fixed the red one to the two fishing rods. On the end of the other fishing rod he made a slip noose and then he was in difficulties. He couldn't manage the two rods and the single rod.

" I'll jiggle the infernal thing," the Old Man said. " This is rock bottom ! A captain of His Majesty's Navy dressed in underpants fishing for parrots with a poisonous silk handkerchief ! . . . At least no one will ever know it ! "

" Don't wave it so much, sir ! " Heavy said authoritatively. " Just little moves so he wonders why but isn't frightened."

For half an hour bright eyes noted the little stirs of the handkerchief, then a young cockatoo began to sidle down into the gap in

the forest. It lifted and lowered its crest questioningly. Then the lovely wings opened and it dropped down like a flower falling to the forest floor and for several minutes they couldn't see it. Then the crested head appeared at the edge of the hole in the thatch, turned sideways, and regarded them. They stayed very still. The cockatoo returned its attention to the handkerchief. What was it? Why did it move? Was it dangerous? Twice it almost gave up the investigation and fled. Then it leaned far over, opening its beak for a tentative tweak. Heavy slipped the noose over its head and a screeching, fluttering bundle of feathers was in his hands, the little heart hammering its panic.

"*Don't be frightened, boy!*" Heavy said. "*Don't hurt* yourself now!"

As the flutters grew less and the bird froze to stillness, he tied the freed end of the line to one little leg, and to the other he fastened half of the airy light silk handkerchief. Then he tossed the bird up so that it vanished with a thrashing of white wings through the thatch hole. He was terrified that it would rush into the bushes and entangle the line, but after a minute it came into view again, flapping and shrieking as it fought its way upward to the gap in the tree tops.

He paid out the line carefully, not tight enough to trip the bird, not loose enough to catch. In a moment the cockatoo had reached the jungle roof; was trying to go up like a maddened little kite. Each time the line stopped it, it fell beating on the tree tops, shrieking plaintively. The handkerchief blazed red in the evening sun. Constantly the attempt at escape was repeated, so that the bird was a red and white signal against the sky. Even as it sank on the thick foliage to recover its strength, it yelled and fluttered.

"Must say he's doing his best for us!" the Old Man muttered.

Twenty minutes later the earth beneath them jarred dully. The Old Man grinned. "The ship's firing! They've seen him!"

Sunset was red on the topmost leaves as the tempo of the cockatoo's shrieks increased. Then there were yells above them and the Old Man was shouting, "Down here! Look where you're going, damn it! Don't fall through, you blamed idiots!"

It took rope ladders and three hours of work before the Old Man sat again on firm ground and dusted himself off. And stars were thick above the gap in the forest as Heavy gently reeled the bird down to free it.

"He sure is pretty!" Heavy said, cupping the crested thing in two huge hands.

"Seems a poor return to let him get shot when he goes flying to the orange groves," the Old Man said. "Suppose it is up to us to find him a good home with an old lady or a little girl!" His eye met Heavy's. "Just see that they live in our first port!"

Getting off watch a week later, Heavy went below fast. The cockatoo was in its cage, lifting and lowering its crest. It was still uncertain but it wasn't frightened now. Today there had even been a chuckle in its calling.

Heavy pulled up a stool and said, "Cocky." The cockatoo rocked from one foot to the other. Then it dropped crabwise to the floor of the cage and moved sidewards towards his finger. The snowy cheeks and sulphur crest puffed up and down. Then it gave a toddle and its feathered cheek just brushed against his finger as it bowed. His heart stood still. Bird and man looked at each other. Then the absurdly curved beak reached out and caught the blunt finger-end in a delicate and confiding grip, while the little dry ball of the tongue flickered against the finger. The cocked, bright eye was wicked, gnome-like and merry, but the beak on the finger was trusting and sociable. It was telling Heavy that it knew him and was his.

But tomorrow the ship would reach port! Tomorrow night there would be nothing to hurry for.

Behind him, a seaman said, "Captain's compliments!" He handed Heavy a dish of walnuts from the Old Man's table. "Captain says he's got so he'd get a shock if he could hear himself speak, so you'd better list the best canary seed or whatever the damned bird eats so it can go on the next requisition for ship's stores!"

Heavy floundered to his feet while the smiles of a child's rapture broke over his battered face.

"Captain said that?" he stammered.

"He did," the sailor said, grinning. "Said seeing as the bird is to be ship's mascot, he expects him to answer 'Aye, aye, sir!' And to say 'Eight bells and all's well' and that you'd better see to it he does—else you'll both walk the plank!"

"He will!" Heavy said. "You tell Captain, he just will! And he has a good name. He's called Cocky!"

* * *

MARGIN OF ERROR

Voltaire having paid some high compliments to the celebrated Haller, was told that Haller was not in the habit of speaking so favourably of him. "Ah!" said Voltaire, with an air of philosophic indulgence, "I dare say, we are both of us very much mistaken."

LORD JEFFREY, in *The Edinburgh Review*

NOCTURNE

Even ambition will give way to the spell of a moonlit evening

by COLIN BULLARD

THE ghost of Aylmer Chauncey strolled across the lawn of Chauncey Priors smoking a cigar. Eleanor, his betrothed, secretly admired what she called—having picked up the expression from the ladies of the Stuart era—his " dalliance with the weed." Openly, however, she avowed with sweet precocity that of all the habits one might acquire after leaving the mortal world, that of smoking was the most truly noxious.

Their simultaneous departure from earthly life had occurred with tragic suddenness in the year 1432, as the result of what the village blacksmith, who also carried out the functions of leech, blisterer and purger, had called " the choking pestilence," which, after all, is about as good a description of diphtheria as one can think of without the aid of a medical dictionary.

Only eighteen and nineteen at the time, they had arrived in the afterworld within a few moments of each other, still trailing with them the diaphanous aura of their romantic earthly affinity and inevitably finding themselves still in love.

Harbouring so peculiarly terrestrial an emotion, they could hardly fail to become earthbound, which is precisely what occurred.

Aylmer Chauncey was a tall young man. His head was set alertly on broad shoulders. His movements were smooth and certain. Arriving at the edge of the lawn he stepped on to a flagstoned terrace and turned along it with easy strides.

The swallows had ceased to wheel round the eaves and chimneys of the graceful old house, and now the bats were fluttering at the fringes of the elms and chestnuts which bordered the far side of the lawn. The warm summer evening enveloped the figure of the young man, but did not entirely conceal him, for the rising moon was nearly full and already cast its pale radiance across the garden.

He watched the curls of smoke from his cigar floating away against the darkening blue of the sky. How beautiful life would have been, he thought, with Eleanor.

And just then her voice accosted him—soft and lilting, urgent,

embarrassed, exactly as it had been that evening they had met, all those generations ago.

" Oh, sir ! Good sir ! Prithee release me ! My hair be caught in the bush. Good sir. Prithee hasten ! "

" Fair mistress, pray calm thyself. I speed to thy service ! " cried Aylmer, continuing the perpetual ritual. He descended from the terrace by some stone steps and ran down a grass pathway which led into the lower part of the garden.

" I vow," Eleanor exclaimed, inserting some extempore ghostly comment as he approached, " thou growest later every time. My neck is all awry with waiting. Prithee hasten, in truth ! "

" Art impatient, sweeting," laughed the young man. Continuing his part, as he pushed through the wide herbaceous border, he said rhetorically, " Heaven be praised that it was I and no other heard thee call ! Oh, mistress, thou art the fairest of all the flowers in this garden. It is only thee . . ."

" Loose me ! Loose me ! " cried the unfortunate girl, who stood bowed most uncomfortably over the bush in which her hair was caught. She was clad in a close fitting, high-necked gown of creamy white, and indeed, with her slender figure and her flushed cheeks and vexed eyes shining among the strands of golden hair, the young man might perhaps be forgiven for forgetting her plight in contemplation of her beauty.

Hastily he sank on one knee beside her and began, with trembling fingers, to loosen the hair from the twigs among which it had become entangled.

As the little scene drew to its close and she was almost free, he remarked, reverting to a conversational tone, " I see little penance, my beloved, in this haunting. It is pleasant beyond all thought of Heaven and angels to be with thee and touch thy hair. Thy perfume from Araby delights me ever newly. I imagine," he added reflectively, " that the sense of smell must be the most spiritual."

" It depends what is smelt, my most precious love. At the moment, that weed in thy mouth . . ."

He laughed softly and, stretching out his arm, laid the cigar carefully on the ground behind a clump of delphiniums.

" Indeed," she continued, reaching out in her turn and stroking his temple with a slender finger, " it is not a cruel curse. I never tire of thee. My heart leaps to thee." She paused and then enquired anxiously, " Didst thou, my love, have speech with the Recorder ? "

" Aye. He says there is only the one way by which we can be freed."

" Hush ! " she whispered. " Someone comes ! "

" It is that fool who thinks only of boxing," he growled, " and

the girl who thinks only of music. I could strangle them both."

"Strange," said a voice from the direction of the terrace, "I could swear someone had been smoking a cigar down here."

"A cigar, Guy dear!" The woman's voice was tender and lyrical.

"Yes. There's a whiff again. Quite definitely! A good one, too."

"But, Guy dear, who on earth would be down here smoking? Your father wouldn't. It has probably drifted from miles away. *The Staghound*, perhaps."

"It really is amazing!" he exclaimed.

"Guy?"

"Yes, Jane dear."

"If you really want to stand here sniffing and snorting and playing Dick Barton, I'll go in and practice my concerto."

"Stop it, Jane!" he cried and, taking her arm, drew it through his own. "Dick is now in the clutches of a mysterious female. The sardonic plutocrat in *The Staghound* shall wait indefinitely."

The other voice made a small murmuring sound and its owner put her hand over his as they moved forward.

They came at length to the top of the stone steps leading down into the garden. At this spot stood an ancient sundial, on sight of which Guy suddenly shot out his arm and consulted the luminous dial of his wrist watch.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "I ought to have done my jerks an hour ago! I must do some now. Do you mind, Jane, old girl? It is very important not to miss a session."

Without awaiting her reply, he stepped on to the turf and began, with vigorous breaths, to go through a sequence of strenuous physical exercises.

Jane watched with mixed feelings of admiration and irritation. Finally she sighed and then moved over to rest against the sundial. She gazed down the moonlit garden, dreaming of her music and, in particular, of Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto, in which she would play with the full municipal orchestra at the music festival next Saturday evening. She dreamed herself on into the Albert Hall and presented herself to the King and Queen. Yes, she certainly had her personal life and she must, therefore, be patient with Guy over his peculiar ambition to be amateur middleweight champion. She hoped he would not get his nice nose broken, or lose his front teeth. On the whole, she decided they were being very sensible to postpone indefinitely any idea of marriage.

Guy came towards her on his toes, shadow boxing. "This night air is grand!" he cried. "Jane, I think I am as fit now as I

have ever been. I'll slog that Westmorland chap next week, belt and all, I swear."

" I'm sure you will, Guy dear."

" Jane, you're marvellous ! " He took her hands and drew her towards him playfully. She held herself away from him gently.

" We agreed not to allow physical impulses, didn't we, Guy ? "

" Yes, but—oh, hang it ! They sort of spring on you when you're off your guard. That's all."

" I know. They spring on me, too."

" We'll just have to watch out," he said. " I don't know how many really good fighters have been softened out of excellent chances—just by women ! "

She had been running her finger over the top of the sundial and now she leaned forward and peered at it closely. " I'll let that pass," she remarked. " Guy, there is something written here. Do you know what it says ? "

" Yes. We used to dance round in a ring and sing it when we were kids. It says :

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying."

There was a long silence before Jane said, " It must be wonderful to be always untrammelled by the physical. One could readily believe so much that is certainly untrue. Walk among the purple islands of the western sky, where heather grows in the soft rain . . .

" Go on," he said. " You make me see things I never think of myself."

" Perhaps being with you makes me think of them, Guy. We have quite a lot in common, really. Just think, Guy, in this old garden how many other little boys have played, and how many people like you and me have wandered out here in the moonlight ! Generation after generation. Hose and doublet. Farthingales. Lace ruffles. Buckled shoes. Velvet. Chain mail. Scarlet uniform. Crinolines. Bonnets and ribbons. Swords and parasols. All among the birds and flowers and the old, old trees ! "

She looked towards him, her long hair coiled and making, in the moonlight, a thick, warm shadow at the nape of her neck.

" Jane ! " he exclaimed. " You're really fey sometimes ! "

" I'm sure there must be the ghosts of some of all those people here," she said. " If we could only see them ! For instance, down there at the back of the border on the left. See, there is a sort of white blurred shape. It might easily be a woman. Leaning sideways. Do you see, Guy ? "

" Yes. But it is only the moonlight on the spiders' webs."

"Oh, Guy. Don't be so damping!" she laughed. "Come. Let's pretend anyhow and go and pass the time of day—time of night I mean—with her."

"Right-ho."

But as they came nearer, the misty white patch became more and more nebulous, until there was nothing there for their eyes to see except the pale wash of moonshine.

The ghosts of Aylmer Chauncey and Eleanor, his betrothed, kept very still. The wild knowledge of some strange, unexpected but closely impending fulfilment was almost bursting their ghostly hearts. They could almost feel the flutterings of earthly emotion. Was it possible that there could be an end of haunting, an assuagement of the centuries of patient longing?

"I will show you where I thought she was standing," said Jane, and she stepped among the flowers in the border.

"Just here," she said, with her feet on Eleanor's, and added, "Oh, what a heavenly perfume there is! It is not wallflowers or night-scented stock. It must be this shrub."

She stooped down, just as Eleanor had stooped for hundreds of years—and indeed, stooped with her now—to smell the nearest cluster, and then gave a small exclamation.

"Oh, Guy," she cried. "My hair has got caught."

Guy crossed to her side and, kneeling down with Aylmer, began to free her hair from the twigs in which it had become entangled.

"I can smell that perfume now," he said. "It is the like of roses but it is not. It is somewhat aromatic. It is thee."

"Thee!" said Jane, in a bewildered voice.

"Yes, thee! What did I say?"

"Hast thou—" began Jane, "I mean, have—you—not freed me yet?"

"Yes, my sweet, just done!" As Guy rose to his feet, he reached behind the clump of delphiniums and picked up the cigar which had been placed there by the ghost of Aylmer Chauncey. A few puffs and it was glowing again.

He led Jane out on to the grass path and they began to retrace their steps towards the house. They put their arms about each other's waists.

Quite suddenly Jane stopped and twisted round to look at Guy.

"You're smoking! What about thy training?" she exclaimed.

"Training, darling?" he asked vaguely, looking deep into her eyes.

"But, Guy!" she said weakly. "Where did that cigar come from?"

" Good heavens ! " he exclaimed, looking in bewilderment at its glowing end. " I'm hanged if I know ! " He frowned and added, " I feel as if I had been dreaming. I'd forgotten all about the fight. I was thinking only of thy loveliness."

" And my perfume ? " she cried. " I feel queer, too. Different. Guy, darling, am I dreaming too or dost thou love me ? "

With a finger under her chin, he turned her face up to his.

" Needest thou ask ? " he said. " I love thee unbearably. I adore thee. When wilt thou marry me ? "

" Tomorrow, Guy, tomorrow ! Time is so precious. I thought you were never going to ask me ! "

" But what about thy concerto ? Hell ! Why do I keep saying ' thy ' ? "

" I'm not interested," said Jane, taking the cigar from his fingers and hurling it into a flower bed. " Noxious weed ! " she cried. " At least, not now. The concerto another day. Thee now ! "

" Thee now," he repeated slowly. " Thee now, my sweeting ! "

* * *

ON THE HOUSE

Digby Dent, at one time box-office manager at the Shaftesbury Theatre, was determined to get a drink " on the house " from a rather mean publican. He was discussing this with a friend when they saw a small boy who had been fishing in St. James's Park. He had a jam-jar full of " tiddlers ". An idea leapt into Dent's mind. He bought the lot, jar and all, for sixpence. He and his friend smuggled it into the pub unobserved. They called for a " Scotch plain " for each of them, added a little water from a jug on the bar and drank the tots off. Then, when the landlord's attention was directed elsewhere, they popped the tiddlers into the jug.

Suddenly they set up a roar. The landlord hurried over to see what was the matter. They drew his attention to the fish in the water. No wonder, they cried, their drinks had tasted funny. They were probably poisoned. Customers flocked round and gazed at the amazing sight of fish swimming around in a public-house water jug.

There was no deception. There they were and not looking very healthy either. The landlord was dumbfounded. To keep them quiet he gave them two large Scotches each. They declined water—they refused even a splash from the siphon—for " you never know ", they remarked—they drank up and went out.

Told by W. MACQUEEN-POPE, in " *Ghosts and Greasepaint* "

NORMAN FARM

She stood square in the gateway like the avenging angel driving Adam and Eve out of Paradise

by MARTIN ARMSTRONG

HE was a handsome, rather ascetic-looking old man with a gentle voice and a slow, deliberate articulation. The strangest experience I ever had, he said, happened to me in Normandy when I was a young man. It was from my mother that I got my interest in France and the French. She had lived in France for many years before her marriage and she taught me to speak French fluently. When I was up at Cambridge I spent some of my long vacations in France, and later, when I had gone into business in London, I used to go over when I could and spend my time prowling about from village to village.

It was on one of these later visits, when I was twenty-four or twenty-five, that I went to Normandy with a knapsack for a week's walking. It was spring. The fields were green, the trees in young leaf, the apple orchards in full blossom, and the weather was that delicious, lively weather of sudden, short, violent showers, flying white clouds and sparkling sunshine.

It has always seemed to me that the French live much closer to the earth than we English. In their small towns the most important institution is the market with its crowded stalls of poultry, eggs, butter, cheese, vegetables, fruit; in the country it is the farm, and in those two institutions man is seen at his most primitive and essential job, the production and distribution of food.

Normandy is a land of farms, and as I walked there, that spring, I seemed to see, before my very eyes, France drawing her life from the soil. In England the process is much less visible and, besides, on a much smaller scale. England draws most of her life not from her soil but from her ships. But France, to a large extent, feeds herself by her own labours. The very cows seem to be conscious of their duty in this respect. In England, a herd of cows roaming loose in a meadow gives the impression of a bevy of respectable matrons taking a leisurely picnic; in Normandy, sternly picketed in long lines on some strip of grassland in the huge, unhedged landscape, they are obviously grazing with the sole object of supplying milk, butter and cheese to their native France.

It is this sense of being in touch with the unbroken current of life through the centuries that I have always found most satisfying in the French countryside. Well, it's a selfish satisfaction, I suppose. I know well enough, certainly, that I should be sorry to lead the life of a Norman farmer. For the small farmer, at least, it is a hard, drudging existence and it produces a hard relentless, close-fisted race. Yet, for all that, there is something admirable in their dogged faithfulness to the soil and to France.

Well, two days before the end of that particular holiday the weather broke and I set out on a chilly, sunless morning that looked as if it would turn to rain. However, the rain kept off till late afternoon and when it started I had walked twenty miles or more. It began suddenly and I got into my mackintosh and plodded on. But to tramp along in a hot mackintosh, with head bent in the teeth of a slanting downpour, and the water working its way up the cuffs of one's coat and trickling down into one's boots is not encouraging after a whole day of walking, and soon I began to feel very tired and decided to try for a supper and bed at the first opportunity.

It was getting towards sunset when I saw ahead of me an isolated building. As I got nearer, I began to think it was a ruined *château*. I could see no windows, only a great walled square with a roof showing above it and, on one side, a fine fortified gateway which was the only entrance. I went in under the pointed arch and found myself in a courtyard, or rather what had been a court-yard but was now a farmyard with the customary dungheap. On the side opposite the gate stood the house, a solid, venerable building with a double flight of steps mounting from right and left to the front door. Attached to it on the other two sides were buildings which had once perhaps been wings of the house but were now stables and cow-houses, part of them gradually tumbling into ruin.

As I stood admiring the beautiful moulding round the front door and the weather-beaten coat-of-arms carved above it, I heard the clank of a pail and saw that in a doorway in the right wing a large middle-aged woman was standing looking at me with her hands on her hips. There was a scurry of fowls from every part of the yard and in a moment they were pecking and jostling about her feet. I went up to her, raised my cap and asked if she would take me in for the night. Her eyes met mine searchingly and with some hostility. "We have no room," she said bluntly.

"Perhaps you would give me some supper," I asked, "and let me sleep on the straw in your barn."

When she didn't answer I added: "I'll pay you well."

That settled it. She took up the pail that stood at her feet and

crossed the yard towards the steps. " Come in ! " she said. " We'll see."

I followed her up the steps, through the doorway and into a large room on the right with an open fireplace. It had been a fine room once with its two large windows and great chimneypiece. On the left of this was another door leading into the back of the house.

" Take off your coat," she said, and she took it and my cap from me and hung them on a hook near the fire. She pointed to a chair. " Sit down."

I did so and she stood with her hands on her hips, looking at me. I did my best to look back at her, feeling rather like a schoolboy who has been hauled up in front of the head master. She was a fine big woman, like so many of the Norman peasants, and would have been handsome if it hadn't been for the unrelenting hardness of her expression.

" You're a Frenchman ? " she asked suspiciously.

" No, Madame ; I'm English."

" English ? Then what are you doing here ? "

" I'm taking a holiday."

I saw she didn't believe that. " If you're English, why do you take your holiday in France ? "

" Because I like France."

" You like this country here ? " She made a gesture indicating the country round us.

" Very much," I replied. " I like the farms."

She fastened on that at once. " You're a farmer ? "

" No, Madame ; I'm a lawyer. I live in London."

" You're rich ? " There was a sudden eagerness in her tone. The mere suggestion of money seemed to rouse her.

" No, Madame, unhappily not."

Her interest slackened at once. " Nor are we," she said. " It's a hard life, especially for women."

" Do you mean you run the farm yourself ? " I asked.

She nodded. " I and my daughter. We have one or two labourers to help."

Although she had told me something about herself, she showed no sign of friendliness. At the same time she seemed to take a sort of interest in me. Throughout her cross-examination of me she had been scrutinizing me with a close, professional eye, for all the world as if I had been a horse or a bull that she thought of buying. It was almost as if, having got me there, and looked me over, she were trying to think of some way of making use of me.

" My husband was killed in the war," she said—she was

referring to the war of eighteen-seventy—" and my son died five years ago."

" And since then . . . ? "

She cut me short. " Four years ago I married my daughter to the younger son of a farmer, a friend of my husband's. We need men, you see. And it was necessary that my daughter should have children, a son."

" And she has no son ? "

" No children at all," she said. " He was a good-for-nothing, a sot, a drunkard. His only idea was to eat our soup and drink our cider and leave us two women to do the work. A good-for-nothing. He couldn't even give my daughter children."

" And so you sent him away ? "

" Sent him away ? " She made a gesture full of irritation. " And how do you imagine I could send him away? We had taken him and we had to keep him."

" Then he's still with you ? "

" He's dead," she said. " Our mare landed him a kick in the stomach." She laughed; a short, grim laugh. " She knew her business better than we did."

" Well, now at least," I said, " your daughter can marry again."

Again she raised her voice in irritation. " And whom is she to marry, if you please ? Do you think we want another idiot like him ? "

" But naturally not, Madame."

" Well then ! " She shot out both her open hands as if she were flinging my ridiculous suggestion back in my face. And then, suddenly and inconsequently, she asked: " And when do you go back to England ? "

" The day after tomorrow," I said.

She nodded her head slowly and thoughtfully, as if I had given her a piece of valuable information. " The day after tomorrow," she murmured. " Good ! "

Then she threw off her reflections, whatever they were, and looked up alertly. There was even a gleam of friendliness in her face. " And you want to stay here for the night ? "

I said I did, if she would be good enough to allow me.

" Let's see now," she said. " I might be able to give you a bed, if . . . " She broke off and turned away as if her mind were made up. " Come with me," she said.

I followed her out of the room and down the passage to the back of the house. At the end of it she opened a door on the left, letting out a soft, golden haze of light into the dark passage. I followed her into the room. On a table near a bed stood a crucifix with a lighted candle on each side of it, and I saw that the bed

was occupied. But something in the rigidity of the occupant told me, even before I had looked at the face, that it was not a sleeper but a dead body. Then I glanced at the face. I had never seen a dead man before and the face seemed to me to be not a real face but a wax mask.

He was a young man, in his early thirties I thought, with a round, rather foolish face, a brown moustache, and an absurd pyramid of a nose that seemed to have been stuck on carelessly as an afterthought. But all this gave him an additional pathos. In a beautiful face there is something that harmonizes with the solemnity of death, but this foolish looking fellow, lying there so resigned and patient, seemed to have had a character thrust on him that he couldn't fill. I felt the sort of pity for him one feels for a bad actor trying to act a great part.

The old woman, noticing that I delayed, raised her voice sharply. "Pay no attention to that," she said with a sideways jerk of the head. "It's only him."

"Him?" I said, deeply shocked at her irreverence in the presence of death.

"Yes, him; my daughter's husband. Don't stand talking there. I want you here."

"But you told me he was dead," I said, meaning that I had thought he was dead and buried long since.

"Well," she said, "can't you see he's dead? It was this morning the mare kicked him. Come on, now."

I went over to where she was standing. A rolled-up mattress lay on the floor. "You could sleep on that, I suppose?"

"Here, in this room, Madame?" I asked, horrified.

"No, no, not here." She went to a second door I hadn't noticed and opened it. Then she took one of the candles from the table and carried it to the next room. "Now," she said as she reappeared, "take one end."

The next room had a large double bed in it. We laid the mattress in a corner, against the wall that separated the two rooms. Then she took up the candle and led the way into the passage and to the door of the living-room.

The living-room was by now dark and she set the candle on the table. "My daughter will make up the bed later," she said.

So I was to share the bedroom of the two women. Well, what did that matter? I was lucky to get a bed at all.

"We'll have supper when my daughter comes in," she said.

She went out by the door near the fireplace and returned with a lamp which she put on the table and began to light with the awful French matches of those days, which went off when you struck them with a pale blue fizzle and then, as often as not, went

out. After three or four attempts she got it lit. "There!" she said. "Now you can take the candle back."

Seeing that I didn't like the idea, she added: "Leave it. I'll take it myself."

She blew it out and, leaving it where it was, went back to the scullery.

Left alone, I sat with my elbows on the table, still awestruck by the thought of the dead man. Only a few hours before my arrival, I told myself, he had been sitting, alive and well, in this very room, perhaps in the very chair where I was sitting, drinking their cider, no doubt. And then, all ignorant of what was in store for him, he had left the room for ever, crossed the yard for the last time, gone into the stable, and there the mare had kicked him. And they had carried him back into the house totally transformed, all in a moment, a helpless carcass, with that strange new dignity and innocence about him. Even though I had never seen him alive, the thing seemed to me incredible. And yet, to this grim old woman, who perhaps had seen it happen or at least had helped to carry him in, that sudden appalling event was nothing more than a stroke of luck, a good riddance to bad rubbish.

I was roused by the sound of clogs on the steps outside and then the door opened and the daughter came in. She stood for a moment, dazzled by the lamplight, and it seemed to me, as I looked at her, that all that had hitherto been so woefully lacking—warmth, humanity, beauty—had suddenly come into the room. She was a very handsome young woman with a warm, healthy complexion and clear eyes. She had her mother's largeness and dignity, but none of her harshness. Drudgery and avarice had not yet begun to dry the humanity out of her. The expression of her face was serious but serene. I could see no trace of grief or horror in it. She hadn't noticed me and, when she did, she started, merely with surprise, not with embarrassment, and calmly and with a friendly smile wished me good evening.

As I was replying, her mother came in, carrying a large pan. "This young man wants supper and a bed for the night," she said as she put the pan on the fire. "I've moved the spare mattress into our room. You will make the bed afterwards."

"Good!" said the young woman. "Now I'll lay the table."

She went into the scullery and I heard the clink of knives and forks and plates. The old woman came and went, bringing in a large jug of brown cider, a loaf, cheese and butter. "You'd like an omelette after the soup?" she asked.

I answered that I would like an omelette if it wasn't too much trouble.

"No," she said, "we'll give you an omelette. We have eggs, at least."

I gathered that my undertaking to pay well had had its effect.

Her eye caught the extinguished candle and she removed it from the table and put it on the chimneypiece. "We'll want it again," she murmured as if to herself. "We can't waste candles. One's enough for *him*."

Soon the daughter came in with a tray and began to set the table. She felt I was watching her and glanced up with an honest and friendly smile in which there wasn't a trace either of shyness or coquettishness. "You're hungry, sir?" she asked.

I told her I was very hungry and before long the three of us sat down to steaming basins of soup which the old woman poured from the pan. We were all hungry, the women after their hard day's work and I after my long walk, and at first we ate in silence. When we had finished, the old woman got up and fetched the pan. "There's still a little left," she said, and she half-filled her daughter's bowl and then poured the rest into mine. When I protested that she had left none for herself she replied with her usual abruptness. "Eat! Eat! You are young, you two. I'm going to make the omelette."

By the time we had started the omelette the first pangs of hunger had been allayed and we began to talk. Even the old woman had been thawed and humanized by the comfort of good food. "Give the gentleman some cider, Rose," she said, holding out her glass to be filled after mine, and it seemed to me that Rose was the perfect name for this handsome, full-blown young woman.

"You like our cider?" she asked me.

"Yes," I said, "I like it, though it is very different from our English cider."

She opened her eyes in astonishment and the old woman gave one of her short, harsh laughs. "She doesn't believe you're English." She turned to her daughter. "But he is, and he's going back to England the day after tomorrow."

She poured out this information eagerly, as if it were important. Then once more she fell to scrutinizing me thoughtfully as she had done during our first talk. From time to time I glanced surreptitiously at Rose. As she sat there, calmly eating and talking, I couldn't forget the young man lying dead in the other room, and I kept wondering what she felt about his death. Was she as callous about it as her old mother? I didn't like to think of her as hard and cruel. But her face betrayed nothing. One would have said she was no less calm and contented than on any other day. How she must have hated him, I thought to myself, to be able to feel so little. Did she know her mother had taken away one of his

candles ? Although I'm not a Roman Catholic and candles mean nothing to me, I had felt instinctively that by that callous action the old woman had stolen from the dead, robbed him of one of his last comforts.

When we had finished the omelette and eaten some cheese and apples, Rose got up and began to gather the plates together. But the old woman stopped her. "I'll clear the table, my girl. You go and make the bed. There, take the candle on the chimney-piece."

Rose went over to the fireplace and I saw her recognize the candlestick as one of the two that had been in her husband's death-chamber. She turned to her mother. "But, Mother . . ." she began.

The old woman cut her short. "Bah! What does it matter? We can't waste candles."

Rose took down the candle without another word, lit it and went out of the room. I couldn't see her face. The old woman, still sitting in her place, watched her go out. As soon as she was gone, she turned abruptly to me. "Young man, I have something to say to you. You have supped well?"

Her earnestness surprised me. "Yes, Madame," I said, "very well."

"And you wish to sleep here?"

"But . . . yes. Haven't we arranged that?"

"Then," she said, setting the palm of her hand emphatically on the table, "you will sleep with my daughter. You will give her a child—please God it's a son—and you will go away tomorrow morning before it's light."

Well, need I say that I was astounded? I wasn't a prudish youth nor, on the other hand, a dissipated one, and her extraordinary proposal, though naturally it amazed me, neither shocked me nor filled me with unholy glee. But after all, a young man——a strong, healthy young man—is an animal, isn't he? It's natural and right that he should be and after I had recovered from my astonishment I felt . . . how can I put it without sounding high-faluting . . . I felt a sort of physical rapture take hold of me.

The old woman had been watching my face intently. "Well?" she said at last. "You refuse?"

"No, Madame," I replied hesitatingly. "I don't refuse, but . . ."

"Good!" she said. "Then it's agreed."

"But your daughter . . .?"

She got out of her chair and began to clear the table. "My daughter will agree."

When she had piled up the tray she carried it into the scullery

and a few minutes later Rose came in by the other door. I met her eyes guiltily, feeling that I had been involved in a monstrous plot against her; but she, knowing nothing, smiled at me frankly as she put the candle on the table, blew it out and went to help her mother in the scullery. Through the faint clatter of plates and the jangling of knives and forks I heard the low murmur of voices and I was overcome with shame and misery. Surely, when she heard her mother's proposal, she would be outraged. How could she fail to feel that I had grossly betrayed her honest friendliness by not instantly rejecting such a scheme? I stood up and then wandered to the door, opened it and went out, down the steps and into the yard. The weather had cleared. The moon, almost at the full, swam far overhead in a deep blue sky, and as I watched it a white cloud sailed across it and went on its way.

When I got back into the house the room was still empty, but soon the two women came in and with a pang I saw that Rose avoided me now. She was carrying an empty pail and, without looking at me, she crossed the room and went out by the other door. At once the old woman began murmuring to me like a conspirator.

"Listen! You will undress in here. Wait a little and then put out this lamp and go into the bedroom. There will be a candle on the chest of drawers. Blow it out before you get into bed; the large bed, of course. I'll wake you early tomorrow and you will get-up at once and come in here. Do you understand?"

We sat in a silence broken only once by the crackle of a log on the hearth that suddenly burst into flame. Then I heard the closing and bolting of the outer door and Rose came in with the pail full of water. Again she avoided my eyes as she carried it into the scullery and again when she returned. The old woman was busy raking the fire and as Rose passed me I touched her arm. She stopped but still didn't look at me. "You too wish . . ." I whispered.

She answered me, before I could finish, with a quiet, expressionless: "Yes, sir!" and continued on her way out of the room. Her mother followed her, pausing at the door to glance back at me.

"Good!" she said. "I will wake you at four o'clock."

For a while I sat staring into the fire. The whole strange affair was almost too grim. It wasn't only, or even chiefly, the thought that the dead man, her husband, would be there, only a yard or two away through the wall; it was my total ignorance of what Rose thought or felt. It would be absurd to say that I was in love with her. How could I be, after a mere two hours' acquaintance? But I admired and respected her deeply. It seemed to me that there was something fine about her besides her beauty, and it was her

fineness and her beauty, those two alluring qualities, that held me back, do you understand? If I had thought less of her, I might have been less scrupulous, less reluctant. It was a fine night. Why shouldn't I clear out and leave them? But that seemed to me, somehow or other, ignominious, and pulling myself together I stood up and began to undress.

When I crept into the bedroom I was greeted by the lonely star of the candle on the chest of drawers. The room might have been empty but for the motionless, vaguely seen mound on each of the beds . . .

I was roused from deep sleep by the grip of a hand on my shoulder. It was pitch dark and for a moment I didn't know what was the matter or where I was. The old woman's voice in my ear brought me to my senses. She was bending over me. "Get up!" she said in a low, urgent voice and then stood away, waiting for me.

I slid slowly out of bed and groped my way out of the bedroom into the living-room, she following me. She lit the lamp on the table and then went and blew up the fire. Neither of us spoke. I shivered as I struggled sleepily into my clothes, while she went to and fro between the scullery and the living-room, filling the kettle and bringing in a bowl, a knife and plate, butter and the loaf. I was hungry and the signs that I was to be given breakfast cheered me. By the time I was dressed she had filled the bowl with coffee and milk. "Eat!" she said as she went out of the room. As I drew a chair up to the table I heard her unbolt the outer door.

By the time she came back I had finished. She looked at me without friendliness or hostility. "Good!" she said. "You're ready. Come along."

I hesitated. "First," I said, "I must go and say goodbye to Rose."

"Certainly not!" she said. "What an idea!"

The idea that there could be some sort of tenderness between us had deeply shocked her. She opened the door of the living-room and then went to the chimneypiece, unhooked my coat and cap and almost flung them at me. Then she pulled me by the arm. "The door's open. You must go at once."

Well, what could I do? I went sadly out of the door and down the steps, she following. We crossed the yard without a word. At the gate I stopped and handed her a piece of paper on which I had written my name and address.

"You'll write to me, won't you," I said, "and tell me if she has a child?"

"Write?" she said violently. "Why should I write? It's finished. Off you go."

I realized for the first time that I didn't know her name nor the name of the farm nor of the nearest village. "At least," I begged her, "tell me your name and address."

She stood square in the gateway like the avenging angel driving Adam and Eve out of Paradise. "That's none of your business," she said, and then added brutally: "You owe me ten francs for your lodgings."

Her words struck me like a bucketful of cold water. I put my hand in my pocket, brought out some paper money and gave her a ten franc note. "Then *au revoir*, Madame."

Her eyes met mine inexorably. "*Adieu*, Monsieur!"

She turned away at once and went towards the house.

I hung about the gate for a few moments, then started sadly on my way. Already there was a flush of yellow in the east and the country round me, like the world after the flood, was rising up into the light of day. And by the time I had gone two or three miles the sun came up, sending a comfortable warmth through the clothes on my back. I plodded on, feeling changed, completely changed, as if I had been born again into a strange new world. Yes, I saw how it was. I was to be eliminated. The child, if it came, was to be the child of the foolish-looking man whom I had seen lying dead with the candles and the crucifix on the table beside him. But I determined, as I strode along, that in a year or two I would go back. Though I didn't know the name of the farm or the village, I would have no difficulty in finding my way.

And you went back? I asked the old gentleman.

He sighed, then gave me a melancholy smile. No, he said. Somehow I never went back.

* * *

MNEMONIC

G. K. Chesterton once operated his own magazine. He was extremely absent-minded. Every morning, on the way to his office, he would forget where it was. He would stop at a street corner and try to recall the address, but always without success.

After racking his brain for several minutes, he would go to the nearest news-stand, buy a copy of his magazine and look inside for the address of the editorial office. In that way, he always got to work on time.

Told in *The Echo*

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

. . . living, shining, sentient things, cascades of jewels, all colour and fire and sparkle

ETHEL MANNIN, *Confessions and Impressions*

And certaynly our language now used varyeth ferre from that whiche was used and spoken whan I was borne. For we englysshe men ben borne under the domynacyon of the mone, which is never stedfaste, but ever waverynge, wexynge one season, and waneth & dyscreaseth another season. And that comyn englysshe that is spoken in one shhyre varyeth from a nother.

WILLIAM CAXTON, 1422-1491

Verb Sap.

" Those who speak know nothing ;
Those who know are silent."
Those words, I am told,
Were spoken by Lao-tzu.
If we are to believe that Lao-tzu
Was himself one who knew,
How comes it that he wrote a book
Of five thousand words ?

ARTHUR WALEY, *Chinese Poems*

Correspondence Course

Cambridge, Wednesday, 4th, eight o'clock : Abbot sent for me to breakfast, went there at nine, Mr. Gibbon had appointed to come there and begin shorthand, which he did : Mr. Gibbon of Emmanuel (Mr. Law's pupil) began Candlemas day 1730. Dined in Hall, very ill-got dinner, &c. ; . . . had sent a boy to Phil. de Willaims but he came not to me again, I went there after four, and he was writing letters, and just then to one Mr. Edwards of Lincoln's Inn to advise him to learn shorthand, told him where to meet with me, and that my terms were secresy and five guineas ; I corrected a letter he had writ in shorthand to John Baskervyle ; . . . at supper Mr. Abbot in the Hall told me Gibbons was gone to his room, I borrowed Heyric's lantern and went there, gave his nurse (my old

nurse) 1s.; he had been playing, he said at quadrille, had writ a little, but very ill, for he makes his letters wretchedly, but reads pretty well.

Mr. Law came in while we were at it and sat with us, and I ran over the theory of it with him and he took it immediately and seemed much pleased with it, said he had never so good a notion of it before, that it was of great use and well contrived, that he was much tempted to learn it; I exhorted him to try; he said the theory of it he saw plainly, and I could say nothing of it but he would allow all the fine things that could be said; I was much pleased that it pleased a man for whom I have a great veneration; he said I should have more pains with Mr. G., because he wrote a very bad hand;

JOHN BYROM, 1692-1763, *in his Journal*

Singular !

Forever ; 'tis a single word !
Our rude forefathers deemed it two :
Can you imagine so absurd
A view ?

Forever ! What abysms of woe
The word reveals, what frenzy, what
Despair ! For ever (printed so)
Did not . . .

And nevermore must printer do
As men did longago ; but run
" For " into " ever ", bidding two
Be one . . .

Forever ! 'Tis a single word !
And yet our fathers deemed it two :
Nor am I confident they err'd ;
Are you ?

C. S. CALVERLEY, 1831-1884

Light in the Darkness

Whenever a man makes one of those lonely journeys into his own mind, or the secret places of his will, he takes with him, like a lamp to explore them, his native language.

ERIC LINKLATER, *Rabelais Replies*

The Connoisseur

To be a collector of language is an innocent occupation. The snatchers and hoarders of birds' eggs and of flowers first create a scarcity, then hunt down the rareties (or, even worse, hire others to go marauding for them) and finally exterminate the beauty which they crave . . . To hunt words is to do no trespass . . . Words can be as rich to the senses as a Painted Lady, Purple Emperor, Bird of Paradise, and the most orchidaceous blooms of domestic marsh or alien jungle . . . They throw colour on to paper and make music in the air. Words are wind and fire . . . They are also the seed of action and the blossom of thought . . .

IVOR BROWN, *Book of Words*

Abhominable !

HOLOFERNES: *I abhor such fanatical phantasms, such insociable and point-devise companions: such rackers of Orthography, as to speak dout, fine, when he should say doubt; det when he should pronounce debt,—d,e,b,t; not d,e,t: he clepeth a calf, cauf; half, hauf; neighbour vocatur nebour; neigh abbreviated ne. This is abhominable, which he would call abominable,—it insinuateth me of insanie.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *Love's Labour's Lost*

Ici On Parle Semi-Huinty

So Professor Nunsen has some authority for disregarding the question of grammatical gender, and it is on this point that he bases his discovery of the existence of the Semi-Huinty languages. These languages, he says, are monosyllabic and have no inflections, the tone used in uttering a word determining its meaning. In this it is similar to the Chinese tongue, which is one of the reasons why China is so far away from the European continent.

Thus the word *reezyl*, uttered in one tone, means "Here comes the postman," in another tone, "There is a button off this pair," and, in still a third tone, "you" (diminutive).

ROBERT BENCHLEY, *One Minute Please*

The Last Word

I am not so lost in lexicography as to forget that words are the daughters of earth, and that things are the sons of heaven.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, 1709-1784

DANDAWA'S MESSAGE

And now all that lay between him and safety were four miles of veld — and one large lion

by LARRY FINN

THE Sebungwe is yet an untamed land. Settlers are few, and great expanses of bush separate the isolated homesteads. The scenery is quite attractive—stretches of tall grass, savanna, forest and leopard-infested granite hillocks, called *kopjes*. The Bazizulu are a fine tribe, cheerful and industrious. They are swift runners.

Dandawa regarded the letter in the cleft stick he was holding and shook his head sadly. He was afraid that he would never be able to understand the magic of these tiny ants which white men drew so beautifully on sheets of paper. He had heard that, in the mountains far to the south, these little insects ran along wires with the speed of Ingwi, without stopping, without tiring, without losing any of their magic. "Wa-ee!" he exclaimed. "Would that they had the wires in this land." And, he added thoughtfully, "with enough to spare to make bangles and bracelets for my sweetheart!"

Dandawa shook himself from his dreams, got up off his haunches and continued his journey across the wide, open veld.

He had set out from the farm early that morning. It was midday now and he had accomplished half of his journey without mishap. He was very tired and he reiterated this fact in a long, tiresome poem he had composed which he was still reciting to himself as he jogged along:

I am Dandawa
My feet are the fleetest.
They are never tired.
Only my body is tired . . .

The herds of grazing impalas and sassabies paid little attention to the running native who zigzagged and went out of his way to avoid stampeding them. Only once, when an ostrich and her chicks got in his way, did Dandawa shout and caper about wildly as though he were a very fierce creature indeed; but his performance only served to infuriate the bird more and she gave chase.

Dandawa ran for his life, clutching at his stick and hoping that the piece of paper would not be blown off by the wind. For if it should, he would have to stop and retrieve it. What the ostrich would do to him would probably be much less painful than what his master would say to him if he lost the letter, and this fear lent speed to his legs.

When the distance between pursuer and pursued increased considerably, the great bird stopped suddenly and loped back to her chicks. Dandawa sat down on a rock to regain his breath. Quickly, he composed a short verse to add to his poem ; and then he went on.

When he came to Chipende's kraal, he stopped only to drink some water and to reject a very tempting offer from Lobi, the chief's sorcerer. Lobi, who had seen the runner with a cleft stick passing his hut, approached Dandawa and greatly admired the written message which he knew was the white man's work and very powerful medicine. He asked if Dandawa would consider exchanging it for two hands of cloth. The sweating runner hesitated, but only for a moment. Visions of an angry master appeared before him, and his desire for brightly coloured cloth was strangled at birth. Dandawa drank hastily from the gourd and sped through the village with the curses of the sorcerer ringing in his ears.

Once more he was out on the open plain and heading for the river which was the last great obstacle on his journey. The river was very shallow at the point he would cross it and was the recognized route for the white man's vehicles, but for anyone wading across, the dangers were great. Gnona, the crocodile, lurked everywhere, lying like a log and then moving like lightning to kill. Dandawa shivered and slackened his pace. He longed ardently for the comfort of his grass hut, with perhaps a pot of beer to drink and the arms of the fat Onesti around him. He had forgotten about his poem now.

Dandawa stood on the bank of the river and tossed rocks into the slow, burbling current, but nothing happened. He put one foot into the water and then quickly withdrew it. Wa-ee ! His heart, which he had often likened to that of Shumba, the lion, had now shrunk to the size of a chicken's. But he must carry on. True, Gnona was terrible, but Dandawa's master was worse. Dandawa's master in anger was as thunder in a flea's ear, as the flame that melted iron, as the drought that ravaged the land. And there was no sign of Gnona. Calling on all the gods he knew, Dandawa splashed into the river and hurried towards the opposite bank.

He was nearly across when the crocodile surfaced and reared up savagely in a swirl of foam. Dandawa screamed and almost

dropped the stick, but he had the presence of mind to plunge forward and leap for the bank. Gnona, missing with his jaws, lashed out viciously with his powerful tail but the only damage that it inflicted was a shower of spray and balls of mud. Dandawa was out of reach. And he stood, at a safe distance from the water's edge, and hurled taunts and insults at the wicked head and malevolent eyes which protruded from the river. Feeling much better, he strode on and composed a verse about the stupidity of Gnona.

The sun was very low in the sky when Dandawa breasted the *kopje* that brought him in sight of his destination. A white bungalow and buildings showed up plainly against the burnt, brown grass and *marula* trees, and all that lay between him and the bungalow were four miles of rock-studded veld—and one large, scraggy-maned lion. Dandawa stiffened and the breath whistled through his teeth.

Shumba was prowling around at the foot of the *kopje*, entirely unaware of the frightened native who stood above him. Shumba peered across the plains occasionally, crouched, flexed his tawny body and then continued pacing up and down in the same compact area. As the sun dropped lower, game would appear. Shumba would choose a victim carefully, stalk and then kill. Meanwhile, Dandawa had to get his message to the bungalow.

The unhappy native seated himself on the slope and gave himself up to a fit of shivers. If the wind should change . . . Wa-ee! Dandawa nearly wept. Beside him, now slightly damp and flaked with mud, was the piece of paper that was responsible for his terrible predicament, and he took time off to scowl at it and bestow a curse. If he ever returned to his kraal, he thought glumly, he would run no more errands for his master. He would ask to be third garden boy, or fifth kitchen boy, or something else less perilous.

Dandawa pondered this for some time and then, when he came back to earth and looked around, he discovered that Shumba had gone.

Slowly, the native crept down the *kopje*, moving from rock to rock. His heart was fluttering like a honey bird, but his common sense told him that Shumba had left the vicinity for more important matters and that now nothing stood between him and his goal except a long, tiring run. He decided to chance it.

He started off quickly at first and then settled down to the rhythmical jog which was second nature to him and which could carry him easily to the ends of the earth. To know that he was on the last lap of his journey gave strength to his lungs and joy to his heart, and already his mind was two days ahead to the time when he would sit in the shade of his hut with a pot of Kaffir beer and with the arms of the fat Onesti around him.

Suddenly a bull kudu rose out of the grass in front of him and regarded him with wonder. Dandawa stopped, undecided. He and the antelope looked at each other for a moment. From quite near there was a coughing grunt and both Dandawa and the antelope seemed to take off simultaneously—and in the same direction. Behind them, Shumba came leaping in great bounds.

The antelope was ahead and rapidly pulling away from the fleeing native and it would be only a matter of seconds before the lion pounced, and yet the unpredictable happened. The kudu turned abruptly and streaked off to the left, and Shumba followed. Dandawa ran with his head thrown back, trying to get every ounce of speed out of his quaking body.

He was still running when Shumba, standing over his kill, watched him curiously before getting down to his meal. The big cat had felt a vague mistrust of a white flapping object which the man had carried on a stick.

It was a very tired messenger who stopped to pick thorns from his feet before entering the bungalow stockade. A rather pitiful sight to behold with his mud- and sweat-streaked body, Dandawa drew himself up and respectfully approached the *mem-sahib* who was cutting flowers in the garden. He handed her the letter and, as she read it in the fading light, a deep frown crossed her face.

"What is it, dear?" her husband called from the verandah.

"Oh, just a note from the Grahams. They want us to go to dinner on Saturday."

"Blast!" the man exclaimed. "Make some excuse. Tell 'em we can't go."

* * *

WHAT, ME?

A soldier who had spent a year in Paris at the end of the war returned to civilian life and opened a sweet shop in a small provincial town. He proudly displayed a sign: *Ici on parle français.*

Years went by with his customers talking just plain English, until one day an excited and very homesick young Frenchman burst in.

"Who is it," he demanded joyfully, "that speaks French here?"

Lifting his eyes from the packet he was wrapping, straightening his tie and blushing all the time, the linguist announced: "*Je!*"

★*Generations of writers have experimented with stories of mystery and horror, and yet we can still turn to admire the genius of one of the earliest—and perhaps the greatest—of them all. "The Masque Of The Red Death" first appeared in 1842, but this story, vivid with colour and terror, rich and splendid in fabric, its material and style wrought to a flawless unity, has remained unsurpassed.*

THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH

by EDGAR ALLAN POE

THE "Red Death" had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its avatar and its seal—the redness and the horror of blood. There were sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution. The scarlet stains upon the body, and especially upon the face, of the victim were the pest ban which shut him out from the aid and from the sympathy of his fellow men. And the whole seizure, progress, and termination of the disease were the incidents of half an hour.

But the Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys.

This was an extensive and magnificent structure, the creation of the Prince's own eccentric yet august taste. A strong and lofty wall girdled it in. This wall had gates of iron. The courtiers, having entered, brought furnaces and massy hammers, and welded the bolts. They resolved to leave means neither of ingress nor egress to the sudden impulses of despair or of frenzy from within. The abbey was amply provisioned. With such precautions the courtiers might bid defiance to contagion. The external world could take care of itself. In the meantime it was folly to grieve, or to think. The Prince had provided all the appliances of pleasure. There were buffoons, there were *improvisatori*, there were ballet-dancers, there were musicians, there was Beauty, there was wine. All these and security were within. Without was the "Red Death."

It was towards the close of the fifth or sixth month of his seclusion, and while the pestilence raged most furiously abroad, that the Prince Prospero entertained his thousand friends at a masked ball of the most unusual magnificence.

It was a voluptuous scene, that masquerade. But first let me tell of the rooms in which it was held. There were seven—an imperial suite. In many palaces, however, such suites form a long and straight vista, while the folding doors slide back nearly to the walls on either hand, so that the view of the whole extent is scarcely impeded. Here the case was very different, as might have been expected from the Prince's love of the bizarre. The apartments were so irregularly disposed that the vision embraced but little more than one at a time. There was a sharp turn at every twenty or thirty yards, and at each turn a novel effect. To the right and left, in the middle of each wall, a tall and narrow Gothic window looked out upon a closed corridor which pursued the windings of the suite. These windows were of stained glass, whose colour varied in accordance with the prevailing hue of the decorations of the chamber into which it opened.

That at the eastern extremity was hung, for example, in blue—and vividly blue were its windows. The second chamber was purple in its ornaments and tapestries, and here the panes were purple. The third was green throughout, and so were the casements. The fourth was furnished and lighted with orange, the fifth with white, the sixth with violet. The seventh apartment was closely shrouded in black velvet tapestries that hung all over the ceiling and down the walls, falling in heavy folds upon a carpet of the same material and hue. But, in this chamber only, the colour of the windows failed to correspond with the decorations. The panes here were scarlet—a deep blood-colour.

Now in no one of the seven apartments was there any lamp or candelabrum, amid the profusion of golden ornaments that lay scattered to and fro or depended from the roof. There was no light of any kind emanating from lamp or candle within the suite of chambers. But in the corridors that followed the suite there stood, opposite to each window, a heavy tripod, bearing a brazier of fire, that projected its rays through the tinted glass and so glaringly illumined the room. And thus were produced a multitude of gaudy and fantastic appearances.

But in the western or black chamber the effect of the firelight that streamed upon the dark hangings through the blood-tinted panes was ghastly in the extreme, and produced so wild a look upon the countenances of those who entered that there were few of the company bold enough to set foot within its precincts at all.

It was in this apartment, also, that there stood against the

western wall a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and when the minute-hand made the circuit of the face, and the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound which was clear and loud and deep and exceedingly musical, but of so peculiar a note and emphasis that, at each lapse of an hour, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance, to hearken to the sound; and thus the waltzers perforce ceased their evolutions; and there was a brief disconcert of the whole gay company; and, while the chimes of the clock yet rang, it was observed that the giddiest grew pale, and the more aged and sedate passed their hands over their brows as if in confused reverie or meditation.

But when the echoes had fully ceased, a light laughter at once pervaded the assembly; the musicians looked at each other and smiled as if at their own nervousness and folly, and made whispering vows, each to the other, that the next chiming of the clock should produce in them no similar emotion; and then, after the lapse of sixty minutes (which embrace three thousand and six hundred seconds of the time that flies) there came yet another chiming of the clock, and then were the same disconcert and tremulousness and meditation as before.

Nevertheless, in spite of these things, it was a gay and magnificent revel. The tastes of the Prince were peculiar. He had a fine eye for colours and effects. He disregarded the decora of mere fashion. His plans were bold and fiery, and his conceptions glowed with barbaric lustre. There are some who would have thought him mad. His followers felt that he was not. It was necessary to hear and see and touch him to be *sure* that he was not.

He had directed, in great part, the movable embellishments of the seven chambers, upon occasion of this great *fête;* and it was his own guiding taste which had given character to the masqueraders. Be sure they were grotesque. There were much glare and glitter and piquancy and phantasm—much of what has been since seen in *Hernani.* There were arabesque figures with unsuited limbs and appointments. There were delirious fancies such as the madman fashions. There was much of the beautiful, much of the wanton, much of the bizarre, something of the terrible, and not a little of that which might have excited disgust.

To and fro in the seven chambers there stalked, in fact, a multitude of dreams. And these—the dreams—writhed in and about, taking hue from the rooms, and causing the wild music of the orchestra to seem as the echo of their steps. And, anon, there strikes the ebony clock which stands in the hall of the velvet. And then, for a moment, all is still, and all is silent save the voice of the

clock. The dreams are stiff-frozen as they stand. But the echoes of the chime die away—they have endured but an instant—and a light, half-subdued laughter floats after them as they depart.

And now again the music swells, and the dreams live, and writhe to and fro more merrily than ever, taking hue from the many-tinted windows through which stream the rays from the tripods. But to the chamber which lies most westwardly of the seven, there are now none of the maskers who venture; for the night is waning away, and there flows a ruddier light through the blood-coloured panes; and the blackness of the sable drapery appals; and to him whose foot falls upon the sable carpet, there comes from the near clock of ebony a muffled peal more solemnly emphatic than any which reaches *their* ears who indulge in the more remote gaieties of the other apartments.

But these other apartments were densely crowded, and in them beat feverishly the heart of life. And the revel went whirlingly on, until at length there commenced the sounding of midnight upon the clock. And then the music ceased, as I have told; and the evolutions of the waltzers were quieted; and there was an uneasy cessation of all things as before. But now there were twelve strokes to be sounded by the bell of the clock; and thus it happened, perhaps, that more of thought crept, with more of time, into the meditations of the thoughtful among those who revelled.

And thus too it happened, perhaps, that before the last echoes of the last chime had utterly sunk into silence, there were many individuals in the crowd who had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked figure which had arrested the attention of no single individual before. And the rumour of this new presence having spread itself whisperingly around, there arose at length from the whole company a buzz, or murmur, expressive of disapprobation and surprise—then, finally, of terror, of horror, and of disgust.

In an assembly of phantasms such as I have painted, it may well be supposed that no ordinary appearance could have excited such sensation. In truth, the masquerade license of the night was nearly unlimited; but the figure in question had out-Heroded Herod, and gone beyond the bounds of even the Prince's indefinite decorum. There are chords in the hearts of the most reckless which cannot be touched without emotion. Even with the utterly lost, to whom life and death are equally jests, there are matters of which no jest can be made. The whole company, indeed, seemed now deeply to feel that in the costume and bearing of the stranger neither wit nor propriety existed.

The figure was tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave. The mask which concealed the

visage was made so nearly to resemble the countenance of a stiffened corpse that the closest scrutiny must have had difficulty in detecting the cheat. And yet all this might have been endured, if not approved, by the mad revellers around. But the mummer had gone so far as to assume the type of the Red Death. His vesture was dabbled in *blood*—and his broad brow, with all the features of the face, was besprinkled with the scarlet horror.

When the eyes of Prince Prospero fell upon this spectral image (which with a slow and solemn movement, as if more fully to sustain its *rôle*, stalked to and fro among the waltzers) he was seen to be convulsed, in the first moment, with a strong shudder either of terror or distaste ; but, in the next, his brow reddened with rage.

" Who dares ? " he demanded hoarsely of the courtiers who stood near him—" who dares insult us with this blasphemous mockery ? Seize him and unmask him—that we may know whom we have to hang at sunrise, from the battlements ! "

It was in the eastern or blue chamber in which stood the Prince Prospero as he uttered these words. They rang throughout the seven rooms loudly and clearly—for the Prince was a bold and robust man, and the music had become hushed at the waving of his hand.

It was in the blue room where stood the Prince, with a group of pale courtiers by his side. At first, as he spoke, there was a slight rushing movement of this group in the direction of the intruder, who at the moment was also near at hand, and now, with deliberate and stately step, made closer approach to the speaker. But from a certain nameless awe with which the mad assumptions of the mummer had inspired the whole party, there were found none who put forth hand to seize him ; so that, unimpeded, he passed within a yard of the Prince's person ; and, while the vast assembly, as if with one impulse, shrank from the centres of the rooms to the walls, he made his way uninterruptedly, but with the same solemn and measured step which had distinguished him from the first, through the blue chamber to the purple—through the purple to the green—through the green to the orange—through this again to the white—and even thence to the violet, ere a decided movement had been made to arrest him.

It was then, however, that the Prince Prospero, maddening with rage and the shame of his own momentary cowardice, rushed hurriedly through the six chambers, while none followed him on account of a deadly terror that had seized upon all. He bore aloft a drawn dagger, and had approached, in rapid impetuosity, to within three or four feet of the retreating figure, when the latter, having attained the extremity of the velvet apartment, turned suddenly and confronted his pursuer. There was a sharp cry—and the dagger

dropped gleaming upon the sable carpet, upon which, instantly afterwards, fell prostrate in death the Prince Prospero.

Then, summoning the wild courage of despair, a throng of the revellers at once threw themselves into the black apartment, and, seizing the mummer, whose tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock, gasped in unutterable horror at finding the grave cerements and corpse-like mask, which they handled with so violent a rudeness, untenanted by any tangible form.

And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revellers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.

* * *

PILGRIMAGE

In the slow-moving train
Across the flowery plain
Of the wide fertile Beause, at last
To Chartres we came ;
And seeking sanctuary from the heat
And cobbled glitter of the street
Within the great cathedral, passed between
The carven ranks of king and queen
Through the north porch ; and, pausing 'mid the vast
Exultant pillars, raised our eyes to gaze
On the rejoicing blaze
Of stained and storied glass, that, jewel-bright
In the intense noonlight
Glittered and glowed, aflame
With every hue—
Corn-amber, charlock-yellow, cockle-blue
And poppy-scarlet of the Beause—and knew,
With visionary mind and skilful hand
Fashioning the glowing windows, passionately
Each of the early craftsmen, too,
Had loved the coloured fields of his own land.

WILFRID GIBSON

CAUGHT IN THE ACT

So young, so beautifully turned out — and a thief!

by NORMAN McGLASHAN

THE modern term was "service flats." In this instance it would have been bachelor flats. But it was London and for several reasons he preferred the older buildings. They were quieter and they had that vague, elusive something the modern, the mansion flats did not possess. The élite called it atmosphere. So in this secluded section of the ancient city they retained the time-worn name, they called them chambers—bachelor chambers. They had elderly, discreet, day and night doormen and they had balconies on the upper floors.

We won't give his name, or the street or compass point because that might be dangerous for him and definitely against regulations these—shall we call them—international times, when spies *are* thicker than thieves . . .

The lady in this case was no spy—that was *his* rôle—*she* was the thief! He had been an actor and, as they say it takes a good actor to make a good spy, he must have been a good actor for he had earned a reputable name in what was known simply as The Service. It was logical, too, that he should have turned his talents to account, and made a little stage-play of the lady's weakness, for she *was* a thief. There was no doubt about that.

The open window was tell-tale. "*Those balconies again,*" he said to himself, "*nice for street scenes, parades, or a breath of air at times, but, dash it—*"

He came in so quietly, so unexpectedly, that he caught her in the act. The dinner silver on the table, the daintily set meal. When she looked up and saw him her mouth opened but there was no issue—no sound. She stood there, transfixed, the moon shimmering down on her, brilliant and silvery, making a stage-setting, a romantic scene, he thought, going to waste, or did it—quite?

It was a bizarre situation. She was so young, so slight, but perfectly turned out—tailored, the modistes have it—refined, dainty even, and to think, but he didn't! He did a surprising thing instead—surprising to her—he picked her up bodily, fur coat and all, just as she stood. Without a sound she wilted in his arms;

went limp ; didn't seem to have any bones at all—just a bundle of kitten-like softness.

She lay utterly relaxed, her sleek, silken legs dangling, one pointing downwards in line and curve of ineffable beauty. Had he seen the symmetry of that clean, taut limb he would have known that here was blue-blood, breeding, the lines of the thoroughbred. But this intimate glimpse was denied him at the moment, it was beyond his vision—he was otherwise engaged.

Her ginger-blonde head lay cradled in the crook of his arm ; it lay snugly on the soft alpaca of his coat. Not buried in its folds —to hide her shame—but lying back, looking up, and brazenly quiescent. She showed no fear. She gave no sign . . .

He was frankly puzzled. As an actor it intrigued him. Why, and to what end this mute abandon—this perfect trust ? Was it a trick—was she trying to enveigle his senses with her lure—she must know she had allure—or was she speechless with horror at being caught and what the consequences might be ? Or, again, was she a hussy, or a moron—did she seek to barter for her guilt—?

On this score she showed no smallest sign. The feel of his supporting arm ; the spread of his hand on her spine was strangely comforting. She *felt* supported, safe, as if each five-star-point was anodyne to hurt—to power—or pain.

For moments she lay supine, mute, her topaz eyes wide, staring upwards—but not into his. Oh, no. Not into his ! Her gaze refused to come to his . . . Ashamed, he thought, and shook his head.

He examined her instead. Examined her minutely ; took her apart with his eyes, analysing as he went :

No lipstick here, no lying rouge, no creamed and powdered skin. No luring scent even but that which was sweet, and clean, and wholesome. A heart-shaped mouth with parted lips a lovely pink, perfect foil for creamy, pearly teeth !

He bent his head still closer but did not deign to kiss her. He spoke instead.

She listened.

" Tricky, dainty bit of femininity, aren't you ? So chic, so sure of yourself in your fur and finery ! Thought it was safe to sneak in didn't you ? Shame, lady, shame. Independent too, I'll say, a regular lady Lucifer . . . Supposing I keep you here—until you tell—who you are—all you know—hold you as a hostage, or—expose you— ! "

His telling words and measured tones cut to her consciousness. She winced—but still she did not speak. Just lay and looked—perhaps thinking . . .

Suddenly, without warning, her eyes changed ; they came to

his, vague shapes darting in the liquid amber of her gaze. Then, they slitted—slitted with meaning!

He caught the meaning and with it the lightest, subtlest movement—a little curl of pleasure.

It was an invitation he couldn't resist!

His arms tightened about her lissom form. Slowly, and with infinite tenderness, he dropped his head to hers; buried it in the warm sweet softness of her neck.

It was then that she purred; purred happily, contentedly.

She had won her point.

At his warm and gentle pressure she put her paws on his cheeks. She knew that she was his kitten, now, his tortoise-shell and white honey-ball in fur . . .

* * *

IN VINO VERITAS

Good wine lights the candelabra of the brain.

GEORGE MEREDITH

Only a genius can sparkle on water.

SIR SEYMOUR HICKS

The future of "He drinks" is "He is drunk."

From a schoolboy's examination paper

Drink first a good large draught of Sallet Oyle, for that will floate vpon the wine which you shall drinke, and suppresse the spirites from ascending into the braine. Also what quantitie soeuer of new milke you drinke first you may welle drinke thrise as much wine after, without daunger of being drunke. But howe sicke you shall bee with this preuention, I will not heere determine, neither woulde I haue set downe this experiment, but openly for the helpe of such modest drinkers as sometimes in compagnie are drawne, or rather forced to pledge in full bolles such quaffing companions as they would be loth to offend, and wil require reason at their hands as they terme it.

SIR HUGH PLATT, *The Jewell House of Art and Nature*, 1594

I prefer the gout . . .

17th EARL of DERBY, *after trying a South African port specially recommended for gouty subjects*

Feu de Joie

THE night was fine and clear, with so many shooting stars that it seemed the Milky Way was keeping Guy Fawkes night, too ; and when we arrived it was conceded that the bonfire was a pretty good one. The top-hamper of boughs and bushes, hedge-trimmings, tree-prunings, and bales of straw, frisked away rapidly in an ephemeral shower of many-coloured sparks, and golden tongues, like cypress trees, licked the night air.

It was considerate of Fawkes to choose for his experiment a time of year when fire glows so magnificently. No summer bonfire could be half so good, and there he sat, the originator of that feast, enthroned in state, top hat and cloak and all, with straw-stuffed face and rubber boots, all spouting fire . . . Dancing figures were black and flat against the glow, and from every corner of Cutlers Green fireworks, organized and unorganized, were fizzing, bouncing, sputtering, spraying or cracking on the grass . . .

We moved back and back as the flames roared hot and white . . . But the best of blazes will fade some time, and it was with relief that we saw a relay of boys appearing, faggot-burdened, from the lane . . . Grandfather sat on his shooting-stick on the edge of the ring of light, sucked happily at his pipe, toasted his shins, and beamed with the unshatterable bliss of eternal youth. "That's right, lads," he encouraged the faggot-bearers. "Go on, get some more" . . . He didn't know, but *I* knew, that they were his own peasticks. Never mind, Guy Fawkes night was no time for too much niceness about property . . .

Soft spheres of red light leapt up into the adjacent sky, searched the face of the round moon, rose, rose, rose, like crimson footballs, died, and rose again. A low-flying plane swam lazily by in the bowl of light so closely lapped by dark, a silver fish in a golden sea, red tips to its silvery fins.

But in the end the last green rain had fallen, not one cracker was left in the box to crack, and, shivering a little from the sudden cold, we went supperwards.

ETHELIND FEARON, *Me And Mr. Mountjoy*

★*It was "Geordie" of course, that tall, kindly, captivating Scotsman who really introduced him, this soldier-author brought up in the Fife countryside, who served with the Black Watch, was A.D.C. in* 1938 *to Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor-General of Canada, and only began to think seriously of writing when captured by the Germans in* 1940 *! Before the war he had been stationed in India for five years—described as the best time of his life !—and perhaps it was his return after the war as a member of Lord Wavell's staff which first gave him the idea and setting for this new story.*

Now settled in Canada with his Canadian wife and children, he has found in writing "the thing I always wanted to do," and when you have read "My Tiger", you will see the wisdom of his choice. ARGOSY *is proud to have secured the first publication rights of this important new novel.*

The First Part of

MY TIGER

by DAVID WALKER

WITH some people it is standing on the bridge of a great ship as she ploughs through wastes of ocean, as the bow plunges down deep down into a mighty comber, the propellers race, and she shudders all through her giant members stem to stern ; and suddenly the Radio Officer comes running with an S.O.S. . .

With some people it is converting the heathen ; it is walking alone unarmed through the dank dark forest where monkeys chatter and a little dart goes *phit* and quivers on a tree, and a python slithers thick across the path. *Oh, my brothers ! I bring the Word.* . .

With some people it is a valley of delight, where rounded lissom maidens wait admiring, secret smiling, neither too diaphanous nor too opaque. Or on the mountain near that same valley it is mighty men, rough, wise and masterful. . .

With all people it is these things and many others according to the mood ; whether only in the might have been, or in the still might be. The less we do, the more we dream.

With Henry Lipton it was tigers.

That was why his attention wandered now from the wife of the Barovian Minister who sat on his right hand and was telling him about the national dishes of her country. That was why he forgot all about her—she wasn't a bad-looking woman—and strained his ears to catch the Indian boy's voice describing jungles to Caroline.

"It must be *wonderful*, Yuvarha," she said, speaking in italics as usual. "Do tell me. Are there many tigers where you live?" Caroline turned her full beam on to the young man, leaning towards him with that rapt attention in her beautiful face which was part of the stock-in-trade and might even be genuine for all you knew.

"Yes, there are many tigers."

"But, Mr. Lipton, of all our dishes this one is the best. Shall I tell it to you?"

"Please do."

"You live in Washington, Miss Drinkwater?"

"Yes, Your Excellency. I have a tiny house down on the canal. It is wonderful for birding."

"For *birding*, Miss Drinkwater?"

"For watching birds, Your Excellency. I'm afraid I give most of my spare time to birds."

"That is most interesting."

"It must be wonderful!" said Caroline to the young Indian with an air of charming and reluctant finality-for-the-moment. She glanced up the small table bright with silver and mahogany reflections of candlelight at Henry Lipton, giving him her personal look which was a little different from her distinguished stranger's look.

Please come, Henry darling, Caroline had said. Do come, Henry, and sit at the head of the table and make the party go. Caroline did not need anyone to make her parties go, which Henry knew well, but she was always asking him since that time last spring, and he knew she really did want him. God knows why she should fall for me, he thought, the rich widow with the best food in George Town and every man in the place after her. I was a damned fool that night. Now she thinks I belong to her, which I suppose I do dammit in a manner of speaking. She's very sweet too when she's alone away from this social racket; but it's not fair. I must have a talk to that Indian guy. I bet he's shot a hundred tigers even if he is only a boy. I bet he's stalked them on foot, and crack—the neck shot. Some people are lucky.

Now Caroline was gossiping with His Excellency of Barovia. This was her life and his life, the ephemeral stimulus of a capital city, where new attractive people always come, and the dinner party is the day's work, and some friends have never met before six p.m. and never will.

The Yuvarha and Madame had started to talk about Barovia. That left Henry and Miss Drinkwater. He had met her often enough, and sooner or later every time it had to be birds. She was a national authority on the subject, so it was hardly to be wondered at that she looked birdlike, small and quick and pecking at her dessert now.

It's all very well, he thought suddenly. It's all very well me jeering at Miss D. about her birds; but she goes birding every day; and here am I just as hipped about something else, and I've never seen a tiger except in a zoo. I'm not like Miss D., I don't go tigering. I just sit at home with a lot of tiger books and read about it. I wish I hadn't come to this party.

But now Caroline had caught Madame Barovia's eye, and everyone stood up. "You-all take as long as you like," Caroline said in a drawl she seemed to reserve for this particular moment at her dinner-parties. She looked warmly at the Minister and the Yuvarha, then let her eyes linger for a second on Henry. "You'll look after them, won't you, Henry? The port and liqueurs are on the sideboard." The ladies went out, and Henry closed the door.

He fetched the port, sat down in Caroline's chair, took the stopper out and edged the decanter towards the Yuvarha who took some and passed it round. Then they were all three fingering thin glasses.

"I heard you speaking of the jungle," Henry began diffidently. But he plunged right in. "What part of India do you live in?"

The Yuvarha was pale-skinned, as pale as an Italian. Only his dark sad eyes told you he was an Oriental, that and a difference about his hands. He spoke English with an Oxford accent, a hint of sing-song behind it; and he dropped an occasional "a" or "the." "I live in Rajputana," he said. "That is in the centre of India."

"I know," Henry said. He did know too; he knew all about Rajputana, a land of feudal chivalry, where princes would spear tigers from horseback, and do a hundred dangerous things for the glory of danger. "How do you kill your tigers there?"

"Mostly from elephants, or in beats. Sometimes we stalk them on foot if the jungle is suitable."

"Have you shot them that way?"

The Yuvarha smiled. He was a likeable fellow. With his modesty and reserve and his dinner jacket and not a sign of emeralds or diamonds, you would never have guessed that he was heir to a father who ruled three million people. "Yes, I got my last one on foot. That was three weeks ago, just before I flew over here."

"I wish you'd tell us about it," said Henry, circulating the port again. He knew it was ridiculous, but his heart had started to thump.

"Yes, please," said Barovia courteously. "That would be most interesting."

"There isn't much to tell. We can only shoot them on foot in open jungle in dry weather when the grass is not high. That night I got *khabbar*, I got news of a kill; so I went down at dawn.

"The tiger had killed a young buffalo at the edge of a water-course. We waited till there was enough light; then we followed the drag along the nullah. It was quite easy to see; after a short distance the dragmark went up over the bank into some scrub jungle, and we found the buffalo. The tiger had had a good feed, so we knew he would be lying up not far away and not far from water. You have never been in the jungle?"

Henry shook his head. *Get on with it*, he thought. There was nothing vicarious about his excitement. He was right in there seeing the scrub in his mind's eye and the white sand of the nullah, and the buffalo with a whiff of death already.

Now the Yuvarha made it even more real for him. "Just after dawn," he said, looking at the candlelight flickering in Caroline's

narrow house in George Town, yet seeing beyond candles and Chippendale chairs. "Just after dawn is the best time in jungle, when the noises are beginning, and there may be a drip of dew and the sun is coming up for a new day." He waved his hand as if to deprecate that painting of background. "The tracker found pug-marks at once. I followed close behind him, and we went very quietly avoiding thorns which make a loud noise on cloth. A peacock screamed somewhere, I remember, but it was a long way off. From the direction the tracks were taking, I thought the tiger must be in a thicker bit of jungle ahead of us. Perhaps we wouldn't see him. Perhaps he would hear us coming. But nothing moved at all as we reached that cover, and we waited for a minute outside looking at the pug-marks.

"They went right in. They might go right through because it was narrow strip and I could see open ground beyond." He paused and took a sip at his port. "I didn't want the tracker ahead of me then to get in the way, so I went on alone. I took one step over a fallen log as carefully as I could, but I made a slight noise. I just saw the tiger with his head down on his paws asleep before his eyes opened wide for a fraction of a second and he charged the way he was facing which was straight at me. Well, I had one leg on either side of log, but I managed to get him. Of course, he only charged because he happened to be facing me, but it was quite exciting."

"One shot?"

"I fired both barrels."

"In the neck?"

"Yes, in the base of neck."

"How big was he?"

"Nine foot five between pegs."

"That's a big tiger."

The Yuvarha smiled. "You seem to know about tigers, Mr. Lipton."

"I've read a bit about them." Henry did not say: I've read about them and dreamed about them all my dull life; and I'm forty years old next Monday, too old to go and see a tiger lording it in his own jungle.

If only . . . he thought. If only I could have done what this boy has done. If only I hadn't been a mother's darling going off on cosy trips to Europe, pampered all my life, not even doing a job in wartime unless you could call being a little Army legal guy in the Pentagon a job. No, you couldn't. And it's too late now. I never fired a big calibre rifle in my life.

The Minister glanced at his watch. That reminded Henry that it was certainly time to join the ladies.

"How many tigers have you shot?"

"Twenty-three," said the young Indian, smiling again. He had very white teeth. "You should see the Indian jungles, Mr. Lipton. If you saw you would never forget. They are so alive and yet so silent."

"I wish I could," said Henry. He looked at the Minister, and they stood up to leave the dining-room.

"Do you carry a big rifle for tigers, Yuvarha?"

"I use a double-barrelled three-eighteen. It has high velocity."

"Is a four-seventy used much nowadays?" Henry didn't really know why this question slipped out of him.

"Oh yes, a four-seventy is very good, but heavy."

They joined the ladies, and the dinner party followed its remorseless course of conversation until the drink tray came in, and more talking afterwards.

"Don't hurry away, Henry," whispered Caroline while he was getting Madame Barovia a glass of ginger ale.

So when the Barovians and Miss Drinkwater and the Yuvarha said their good-byes and such a delightful evening, Henry lingered. Caroline at a dinner party was one thing, but Caroline alone was quite another.

"Help yourself," she said, leaning back in the corner of the sofa.

He poured a very thin one because tomorrow was a working day, and he had had enough already to know that one more good-sized drink would make the morning painful. He sat down at the other end of the sofa. "The party was a success."

"Of course it was. Give me a kiss." That was the private Caroline; she wanted something, she said so.

He gave her a kiss. He gave her several. He moved up to her end of the sofa and went on kissing her while time flew away, and she was warm, good-smelling in his arms.

"Did you like the Indian boy?" she said suddenly, as if it was just a conversation they were having.

Henry never could think of two things at once the way women can. "I thought he was a swell fellow," he said in a minute, but all the dismal thoughts about himself came flooding back. "It's time to go home."

"Don't be *mean*, Henry darling."

More time passed, and a clock struck one somewhere slowly. "I must go," he said, pulling himself together before all would be lost. "I have to work tomorrow—today, I mean."

"*Must go home*," she mimicked him. "Little prissy Henry always in a hurry, always has to go home to beddy-byes. Every time except once. Once you didn't hurry home, silly Henry! And that was too much for you."

Danger lurked suddenly. He knew the signs. Loving one moment; teasing the next; angry the next. "It's all very well, Caroline, but I have to go to the office. *I* can't stay in bed till noon."

Caroline sat up straight. "You mean you can't do anything which would break your precious little routine. If you ever do an unexpected thing in your life, I'll burst into tears." Her eyes were sparkling. She was going to be in a tantrum any minute now.

Henry finished his drink hastily, put his hands on her shoulders and kissed her averted face. "I know, Caroline," he said humbly. "Good night. You're too good to me." But to himself he said

with disgust as he went for his hat and coat: That's typical too. You make love to her because you like it; then you just leave her flop suddenly because you're scared. You want to have it easy both ways with no risks.

The door closed. "Damn him!" said Caroline aloud to the empty room littered with glasses and cigarette stubs smeared red, and the fire dying. "Damn him for being so sweet to me."

Henry drove the Cadillac fast through narrow streets and broader streets and round the circle on to Connecticut Avenue and up that, wide and deserted, over the hill in a hurry at one-fifteen in the morning. But he was not hurrying to bed; he was hurrying to escape the frustrations of forty years next Monday. And who would think that a young Indian prince at a Washington dinner party, and a young lonely woman he was fond of and attracted by but did not love—who would think that the one unwittingly and the other angrily would make him see Henry Lipton for what he was, for what he had always been—a little man in an armchair going tigering in books. Even Miss Drinkwater saw her wild eagles.

IT was Miss Drinkwater who stood beside Henry. *Got him!* she said distinctly and gleefully, small Miss Drinkwater from behind huge binoculars.

But he did not know what rarity she had seen; or he had forgotten already by the time he opened his eyes to the bright light and Mrs. Robbie drawing the curtains.

"Seven-thirrty," she said. "Time you was up."

Henry groaned and turned away from the light. "What sort of a morning is it?" he mumbled.

"What like a morning is it? It's a fine morning and the sun's out, and you'd be wide awake now if it wasn't you'd been late getting to your bed."

He reached for the cup of china tea and lemon. It was the only way to rid himself of Mrs. Robbie, a most determined morning-caller. She went out of the room.

"Twenty years," he mumbled between sips. "Nineteen years it must be since she came from Scotland, and almost every damned morning she's woken me up with that damned Scotch voice. Oh, damnation!"

He shaved and dressed, went downstairs, gulped his orange juice, read the paper, ate one fried egg and bacon, drank two cups of coffee, and it was eight-forty-five. "I'll be home tonight for dinner," he said to Mrs. Robbie.

"That'll be a nice change."

She shouldn't talk to me that way, he thought as he went for the car. She really shouldn't. It's not right for a cook-housekeeper. I'll have to speak to her. I'll say: Mrs. Robbie, don't make impertinent remarks.

He backed the car from the garage, and drove out of the driveway to join the long stream of automobiles going towards the city. It was only by chance that he glanced over to the left as he was passing the

Zoo. It was just chance ; and the sudden whim that made him do a U-turn must have been chance too. But it was done ; and the same odd compulsion, the same knowing but not knowing, led and accompanied him in his light spring overcoat and dark hat past a cryptic notice which said that lost children would be taken to the Lion House, and into that very place where the smell of the big cats was evident if not objectionable.

The tiger had a lack-lustre look. It was a moderate-sized specimen, with a dull coat and a general air of dejection. It lay with its head on its paws, looking out past Henry, not showing the smallest interest in him.

How old was I the time I came here with Father? I was six, and he had just come back from his last trip to India. I remember he was in bed with that dysentery, amoebic dysentery, which killed him in the end. But he didn't have a fever ; he was just wasted thin. He'd been telling me about his trip. And I said : *Daddy ! How could I see a tiger ?—You could see one in India, son ; or you could see one in a zoo* —He was always very serious answering those kind of questions— *Wouldn't the zoo be easier, Daddy ?*—He laughed at that, one of his belly laughs which made the bed shake—*Could you show me one in the zoo ?*—He sat for a minute quite still, the way he did when he was thinking—*I'll show you one today. I'll show you one right now if you get out of here while I dress. Go and ask Johnson to bring round the motor.—Don't fuss, m'dear*, I heard him saying to Mother. *If Henry wants me to show him a tiger, I'll show the boy a tiger. It won't do me any harm. We'll come right back.*

So Johnson drove us down in the car. It must have been a queer-looking object, that car, the motor we used to call it. We left it and walked over to the tigers, Father a bit unsteady on his legs.

We stood a long time looking at the cage. The tiger was lying down, just like this one is lying down, not noticing us. Then it got up and paced back and forwards across the front of the cage, sort of like a pendulum with the hindquarters hardly moving, back and forwards, back and forwards.

There you are, son, said Father quietly.

It's a lovely tiger, Daddy, I said ; because I thought it was the loveliest, biggest, fiercest thing I'd ever seen ; also Father was very quiet, not like his usual self, and I was old enough at six to notice that, and perhaps I wanted to cheer him up.

No, Henry, he said. *That's not a lovely tiger. That's a sad tiger, and I wish I'd never brought you here.*

He turned right round and walked slowly back to the motor, and that was the first tiger I ever saw ; and I remember the day here with my father because it is my last memory of him. My first tiger and my last memory of my father the big game hunter ; and he died, and my mother tucked me safe into her pocket.

EXCEPT for the attendant who stood over in the corner, Henry was still alone with the big cats—tigers, leopards, jaguar, the slender cheetah different from the others—and all of them

ignored him; the place was silent except for a padding of paws.

Now the tiger had begun to pace. It was just as Henry remembered so sharply from his childhood. It was the same as a machine but fed with a few pounds of meat instead of gasoline or coal every day, doing the same three mechanical strides in shuffling power to the left and back again, pivoting on the hindquarters, and the eyes not watching but turning with head and body. It was a sorry object, and you could not visualize the sorry object where it ought to be in its home.

He heard footsteps. "There you are, Johnny." A woman and a small boy came up beside him. She had the rather harassed look of a mother who has the marketing to do, and she also has a small son of five or so who is a stranger like all small sons and has decided that this very morning now just after nine o'clock he has to go to the zoo, not at eleven o'clock or this afternoon or on Saturday with his dad, but right now. The way she glanced at Henry and down at the boy told him all that. She was a nice-looking person.

"Isn't that a lovely tiger, Johnny?" she said.

The small boy said nothing. He stood with his hands deep in his overcoat pockets watching the tiger slouch across behind the bars.

"That's not a lovely tiger, Mummy," he said finally and unexpectedly. "That's a sad tiger." His lower lip trembled, and a couple of tears swelled and trickled down his cheeks.

The mother shrugged her shoulders, smiled at Henry, took the boy's hand, and they went right out again.

Hearing his father's words from this small boy called Johnny did an extraordinary thing to Henry. It said to him: Henry Lipton, that little fellow saw something your father saw thirty-four years ago, and you never saw it. You never really saw it until now. That poor creature is to tigers what you are to real men; only you have the power to come and go, and it has no freedom. *You should see the Indian jungles, Mr. Lipton. If you saw you would never forget. They are so alive and yet so silent.* Yes, you should see them. You're going to see them now right away before it's too late. You're going straight off to book your passage . . . I can't do that . . . You can do it and you're going to do it.

So he did. A quarter of an hour later he was booking it at American Travel.

"I'd like to make a telephone call while you're looking up schedules."

"Why certainly, sir. Please use my telephone, or would you prefer a private . . . ?"

"This will do very well."

"Is that you, Horace?" he said to the senior of his law partners. "I'm delayed this morning. I'll look in for an hour later on."

"You'll *look in?*" Horace sounded surprised. "Is anything wrong, Henry? There's a lot to discuss with you—that Perry case is coming up for appeal next week, and . . ."

Henry understood very well why Horace was surprised—because

he, Henry, never " looked in " at the office. He went there on the dot every morning.

" I may as well tell you," he said now without a trace of embarrassment in front of the American Travel clerk. " I may as well tell you that I shan't be here next week. I've just decided to take a long vacation."

" But Henry ! We can't spare you. We can't possibly do without you. Come on now, Henry. Stop fooling."

" I'm not fooling. Also it's time you learned to do without me."

" Where in God's name are you going, Henry ? "

" I'm going to India. See you later." Henry hung up.

" Have you got those schedules ? " he said briskly to the clerk.

" Yes, Mr. Lipton. Here they are, sir. Would you like to stop over in England, or fly right through ? American Skylines connect with their Far Eastern service at London. That's landplane throughout and gets you to India in two and a half days. Or there's this flying-boat service which takes longer, but of course some people prefer flying-boat travel."

" I prefer flying-boat travel," said Henry. He had hardly ever been in a plane, far less a flying-boat, but flying-boat travel sounded good, so he decided on it with the masterful ease of decision which must have been lying dormant in him for forty years next Monday.

" Book me on the Skylines plane tomorrow morning. Book me on the flying-boat the next day from London. I will come back at two-fifteen for confirmation."

" The Far Eastern services are crowded, sir. Also we may not have heard about the reservations by two-fifteen."

" Do your best, please," said Henry. " I shall rely on you."

" Certainly, Mr. Lipton."

" Very well," Henry said. " Until this afternoon then."

He nodded, picked up his hat and walked off.

The clerk looked after him.

" Some go-getter, that guy ! " he said with admiration, wishing that he himself had been a man of action booking passages to India in five minutes like as if it was routine bus travel. That was the kind of customer you could take some trouble for. Soon the wires were humming.

BY the time Henry had bought himself a solar topi and other wearing apparel, had telephoned Mrs. Robbie to say he would be home for lunch, had looked in at the office to tell his electrified partners that yes, he really did mean it, and every single one of them had gone away often enough before and left him to hold the baby so what was all the excitement about, and no, he did not give a damn about the Perry case, it was nearly one o'clock.

Mrs. Robbie was waiting for him on the doorstep.

" What's got into you ? " she demanded. " Here's me with not a thing except a lamb chop in the house, and half an hour's warning. Is the club burrnt down, or what ? "

" You should be stocked against emergencies," said Henry. " I

would like lunch as soon as possible." He walked on past her into the sitting-room. The masterful mood was still on him. It had lasted all morning, and in a way was the most exhilarating aspect of the whole affair. He, who had never said boo to a goose, now had the gratification of seeing people jump to obey his imperious wishes, and they jumped with an astonishing alacrity.

" I'm going to India tomorrow morning," he said when two chops after all not one lay on his plate, and she was handing him the salad.

" You're what ? "

" I'm going to India tomorrow morning to shoot tigers, and I shall be away two months or longer, I haven't yet decided how long."

" Well, I never," said Mrs. Robbie. " Well, I never." She went out ; but she was back before he had finished the chops.

" Was it tomorrow you said you was away ? " She looked at him closely in much the same puzzled way that Horace had looked, wondering if he had gone crazy.

" I told you twice, Mrs. Robbie."

" Yes, Mr. Lipton."

After lunch he went right up to the attic for his father's big rifle. There was a smaller rifle too, but this one, the double-barrelled four-seventy, was the best weapon for big game. It was extremely heavy in its case.

" Mrs. Robbie ! "

She came at once, with a ready-for-anything-now look on her face.

" Bring me a cotton rag or a duster or something, please."

She brought him a duster and stood watching while he wiped the thick layer of petroleum grease from the barrels.

" It's a lovely weapon," he said. " Made specially in London for my father."

But Mrs. Robbie was looking at him, not at the rifle.

" I never thought," she said slowly. " I never thought you had it in ye."

" Well, now you know." That was the outside of the barrels done. He began on the action.

" What clothes will you be after wanting ? "

" Thin suits, tropical khaki. All that stuff."

" What am I to do when you're away ? ".

" Just look after the house and take it easy."

" Take it easy ! " she muttered. " How would a body learn to take it easy at my time of life ? " She stumped off to lay out his clothes.

But it was time to go back to the American Travel office. The clerk had all the reservations confirmed. Somehow Henry had never doubted that he would. And now the cheque was written, the tickets were in his pocket, and Henry was back in the car, a little startled for the first time when he realized that he had been thinking of this trip all his life, and the whole thing had been arranged in two or three hours, a great deal more quickly and simply than he had ever arranged his annual vacation.

He pressed the button to open the convertible, for it was a very

fine warm day at the end of March, and Washington was at its most beautiful. It was just the day to take a toot around the Lincoln memorial and see the pale pink cherry blossom coming to its glory, just the day to improvize a song: *Oh, Hindustan; Oh, Hindustan. Oh, glamorous land, I come to thee.*

Abraham Lincoln had his dream. You can see his dream behind those fluted columns; you can see it in his sombre face. And me in my small way, I have my dream. *Oh, Hindustan.* And who knows what may not be when I have realized my dream? I shall return a new man. I shall leap into the arena of my native land. Henry Lipton, the white hope of my country, Henry Lipton, tiger hunter and President, the Teddy Roosevelt of the nineteen-fifties.

Thinking and singing these noble thoughts, he drove for a while beside the slow Potomac, and so back home to do his packing, back home to a Mrs. Robbie whose motherly notions of Henry Lipton had been shattered at one fell swoop. *I was fair bewildered*, she said afterwards to her compatriot, Miss MacLaren. *A nice dull gentleman all these years.—Mebbe he'd went a wee thing daft*, suggested Miss MacLaren.—*Certainly not*, said Mrs. Robbie indignantly. *There was no daftness in it. It was just like he'd come to his senses and he knew quite sudden the power that was in his stummick.*

It was six o'clock when he remembered Caroline. Better just call her, he thought; so he dialled the number.

"Thanks for the dinner party," he began. "Caroline, I'm going to India tomorrow."

"Going to—? Going to Indiana tomorrow?"

"No, not Indiana. India, where Hindus come from."

There was a silence at the other end of the line. "Good gracious! Do you have *law business* in India?"

"No. I'm going to shoot a tiger."

"*What?* Henry! Henry darling, you must have gone crazy."

"I have not gone crazy."

But it was very evident from the expostulations, and then the sudden change to a soothing tone that Caroline did think he had gone crazy. "I'm passing your way. I'll just drop in for a minute, Henry dear."

The line went dead. He hung up, and went on selecting books from the tiger library in his study. He knew most of them by heart, but there were one or two standard works which it would be useful for him to take. He had chosen three—Durnford's *Tiger*, Slater's *Shikar in the Indian Jungles*, and another—when he heard the front door open.

"Henry!"

"In here, Caroline."

She came into the small room, and Henry stood up. Caroline looked as nice as usual, as *soignée* and cool but warm underneath. I'm going to miss her, he thought suddenly.

"I'll get a drink."

"I've never been in here before," she said when he came back. "What an extraordinary room; but I do rather like those tiger

pictures." She pointed to the photographs which were arranged in a panoramic frieze effect all round the walls, each animal as fiercely majestic as the next.

The whole room was tiger—tiger books, tiger skins, tiger pictures, tiger faces. It was the place Henry had always come to dream his dreams. But now for the first time in some way he found it distasteful. I'm through with all that academic stuff, he thought to himself. That's why. Now it's going to be the real thing, and I do not wish to be reminded of my softness.

"Let's go in the other room."

"You're not really going to India?" she said in the sitting-room.

"Yes, I am. Tomorrow at seven a.m."

"But why? What on earth for? What's got into you, Henry?"

"I told you why."

"But you're not like yourself. Not like you at all. You're different."

"I know I'm different."

"You're wild-eyed. You've got a mad look."

"Now don't be stupid, Caroline. And anyway, what did you say last night? You said I couldn't do anything to break my precious little routine. You said if I ever did anything unexpected you'd . . ."

"Yes, I know I did." Whereupon Caroline felt instinctively to make sure her handkerchief was handy, but she was far too dumbfounded for the promised tears to come to anything. "You mean you really want to go off to some silly old jungle?"

"Certainly I do. There's sense in going to a jungle; more sense than in staying in this crazy town."

"Crazy town! But this is Washington, D.C. There are more interesting people here than anywhere on earth. It's important here."

"It's not important. It's singularly unreal and unimportant and I'm bored with the whole social racket, and with slick people and slick dinner parties. Not your parties, Caroline. Just parties."

"Don't you know important things happen at dinner parties?" She stood up. She was not angry with him now. "Goodbye, Henry," she said. "I hope you have a good trip." But the way she said it was more than a farewell for two or three months. If he was mad, it was a devastating kind of madness making him suddenly the enemy of all the things she most believed in, and she was profoundly shocked. She had never guessed that this hard traitor could lurk in Henry, a man so timorous that he had dared to be her lover once and never again although she had good reason to know he found her desirable.

He kissed her, and they went together to the door; and he thought later in the first reaction after this turbulent day: I was hard on Caroline. I insulted her mortally. I scorned her beliefs. She really does think her social life is important.

MANY people are uneasy when they fly. Henry was uneasy now, but not for the usual reason. He was uneasy because the habits of his forty years had been rudely set at naught; also it was Monday, so he had reached the age at last, and that gave him an additional jolt

of disquiet even though he was now winging the aerial road to romance.

The past three days had not been adventurous. There had been no long delays. Nothing had happened to make the air-line officials put on that soothing manner, blandly, indulgently, ruthlessly patient, which is a necessary armour for their sanity, yet gives them an Olympian air among those of their kind. No, it had all been routine ; but it had not been Henry's own routine, and the masterful sensations which he had experienced for the first time in Washington had dropped off piece by piece on the way.

He listened to water lapping on the hull of the flying-boat with that peculiarly intimate I'm-right-beside-you lapping. Through the window he saw a few lights on the far bank of the Nile, shimmering their slender paths across the river. It was four-thirty a.m., and he had had four hours' sleep. What I want to know, he said to himself, what I want to know is why in God's name do they get us into this damned boat at four in the morning and then keep us hanging about in the river doing nothing ?

Three of the other four passengers in the forward cabin were restive too. They crossed their legs and re-crossed them, glanced at magazines, peered out of windows. The fourth was a tubby little man from Huddersfield on his second trip already this year to Australia. He had gone to sleep with his head turned sideways on the back of his seat. His light snores rose and fell distinctly in the cabin.

But now at last, and for once in a way, the delay was explained. A motor-launch came puttering alongside, waited only a moment, drew away ; the door closed behind in the hull, and the first propeller turned slowly, caught, popped, missed, caught again, spun steadily. That boat must have brought something or someone.

The someone it had brought was escorted by the steward into the forward cabin. It was a young woman. She glanced once coolly at each face, then sat down in the spare seat across from Henry. She was a young woman with an air about her, the air of a person who would keep scheduled flying-boats waiting, and would arrive finally and not be in the least grateful or apologetic, but take it all as her due. She was good-looking too, with the ineffable somewhat long-nosed stamp of the English upper classes, faintly suggestive of a beautiful horse.

Henry was always one to catalogue a lady's appearance. He catalogued her now—noting medium height, and a certain fluidity of movement, and legs good even in stout shoes and a shape the way it should be ; all marred however by that unconscious arrogance of face. She was strange to him in an unacceptable way, and he took a dislike to her.

Meanwhile the other engines started one by one, and the plain lap of water changed to a hissing sliding lapping as they taxied to take off.

Then minutes later the lights of Cairo were falling away astern, another place left behind ; the last drops of water trembled and

dwindled on the windows of the lighted cabin, and Henry was smoking the cigarette which he had been needing so badly.

The girl poured whisky or something from a large flask into her coffee, taking her time about it at the unconventional hour of five in the morning. Then she glanced casually at Henry and offered the flask.

He shook his head, changed his mind and took it from her. "Thanks," he said, giving himself a small shot. What was one more unusual thing in a world of surprises? It was brandy; it sent a warm and comforting sensation through the inside of him which was chilly-empty, not hot-sticky like the clothes on his back; and suddenly he remembered that all this uneasy change and all this indigestion from different and indifferent food was incidental. Things were not so bad after all; things were worth while as a means to a noble end.

"I kept you waiting a bit," said the girl. "Frightful bureaucrats these people."

There was a zipper bag on the seat beside her. *S/Comdr. A. Marriott* was stencilled across it in white letters, faded but distinct. Henry's hostility had abated a little. It was not like him to have very active feelings about people, and she had given him liquor from her capacious flask, albeit with a somewhat patrician air. *S/Comdr.* What would that stand for? Comdr. was easy enough. She must be an Army, an Air Force or a Naval woman, perhaps even a police woman. But whatever kind of commander she was, command was certainly written all over her—sub, service, station or senior. She was wearing a green cotton dress, palpably not a uniform, so that gave no indication. Henry mused idly about this, not much interested. The girl might have looks of a kind, but they certainly were not his kind. Henry's kind of looks were the *soignée* femininity of Caroline for example, but a little less sophisticated than Caroline. He liked them cuddly yet chic, not challenging his masculinity.

Dawn broke quickly on the Judean hills—from vague darkness into grey, from grey into dull brown, and all dead and deep-cut sterile like moon mountains. Then it was daylight; the first gold-green rim of the sun showed in the East, and the land was not dead but warmly, contrastingly alive in the beginnings of sunlight. The flying-boat bumped and flew steady, bumped and flew steady at a great height in coolness, so that the hardening day seemed far away down there with hills falling back now. Henry closed his curtain and dozed.

They flew on all morning above the near-white desert where nothing moved except the shadow of the plane keeping pace a little behind but gaining all the time, and no clouds ever to defeat that remorseless companion, welcome in a way, yet a little frightening, reminding you that you in your boat were tied to a waterless land.

They landed on a Mesopotamian lake where the heat was lip-burning and the sun dazzling on water; then on once more, climbing into coolness, and the Persian Gulf below them, perhaps ten thousand feet below with land showing intermittently to port.

"It's boring," said the girl, S/Comdr. A. Marriott whoever she might be if that was her own bag. "It takes a long, long time, although you get there sooner in the end." She yawned and stretched with a sort of lazy impersonal grace, as a sleek cat stretches itself after supper.

Henry often thought of people as animals, or compared them with animals. That little man from Huddersfield, he was a doggy man. This girl was an unusual mixture of horse and cat—horse in the chiselled nose and lean breeding, cat in the sinuous indifference and superiority. She dropped remarks, simply dropped them, to take or to leave.

"That's true," he said, thinking how true it was.

"You an American?" Ratatatatatat, the six syllables fired off automatic.

"Yes, I am."

"Where from?"

"I live in Washington." He just said Washington, the way people do to find out if strangers know.

"D.C. or State?"

"D.C. Have you been there?"

"No. Ghastly climate, everyone says."

Who's everyone? Henry had said many thousand times that it was an abominable climate, and he had been bored with the place when he left; but now over the Persian Gulf with this strange woman speaking rudely of it, he remembered differently. "It can be a wonderful climate in the spring and fall."

"First person I ever heard say a good word for it. You going far?"

"I'm going to India." Henry was a little irritated at having questions fired at him like shells. "Where are you going?"

"India too. Name of Antonia Marriott. What's yours?"

"Henry Lipton," he said weakly.

IT was just at this moment that something happened which ironed out his irritation and told him with throat-gripping suddenness that air travel was not an impersonal boredom to be endured, but something very personal indeed.

A wisp of smoke oozed round the edges of the cockpit door. Henry might not have noticed it immediately except that the man from Huddersfield who was in the front seat saw it beside him, jumped for the door and opened that, and it was not a wisp now but a cloud of blue smoke smelling acridly of burning rubber. Then the steward ran past, pushing the man back to his seat, closing the door behind him.

The bow dropped sharply, sickeningly into silence except for propellers milling slowly, and all six of them in the forward cabin gripped the arms of their comfortable seats watching the door through haze, seeing more smoke eddy and thicken; and there was a sudden sharp hissing. They're trying to put it out, Henry thought, his mind a trapped confusion, knowing there was nothing to do except wait

for the putting out of the hot flame. He could feel his face sag with the blood draining from it, and his ears filled tight. I come away from safety. I come away from Mrs. Robbie and the law business, and I burn up in an airplane on my fortieth birthday. *Too bad about old Henry*, Horace will say. *He was fated, that's all.* I know now how those guys must have felt in the fighters I once saw collide in the sky and plummet a long way before the smoke and flame streaked out.

But the flame did not come. The smoke stopped curling at the door. The propellers were still now with feathered blades, and the air made a light rushing.

" It's O.K.," said the girl in quite a strong voice, or it sounded strong in the new silence which had been going on a short time or a long time.

The steward came back then while the plane glided serenely. He had a long black smudge on his cheek, and his hands were black too. He held them a little farther from his sides than was the natural angle. Everyone looked at his face and then at his hands. He pushed the door shut with his foot. " It was a short in the main fuse box," he said. " Quite all right now. We shall be landing in a few minutes. Please put on your life jackets which are under the seats, and fasten seat belts. Quite a normal landing." The steward smiled. He looked calm enough and confident.

"Ah blooody well knew it," said Huddersfield, his voice gone broad and cracked. "Ah blooody well knew it." He dived for his life jacket.

" It really is all right, sir," said the steward, moving on down the gangway. Henry could hear him saying his piece in the after cabin ; then he came forward again.

" Did you burn yourself ? " said the girl.

" Nothing much, just fingers." He opened the cockpit door gingerly and went through.

I'd forgotten all about that guy's hands, Henry thought. She must be a cool one to ask him about it now. He looked back out of his window at the left wing dropped in a gliding turn, and the small wing-float a long way out and down. There was no land at all in sight ; but the turn continued, and his ears went on popping, and suddenly there was land quite close coming into view on the port bow. The wing came up and she glided straight. You didn't need to be an engineer to guess why they were gliding down now to land on a white-capped sea with no motors. The fuse box must have blown with a vengeance. It must have blown every damned fuse. Or perhaps they'd cut the whole lot not knowing where the trouble was.

And now that the sea was coming up fast, you realized alighting on water had additional complications which only began at the point where a landing on terra-firma finished. From a large air boat you changed very quickly indeed into a small sea boat wallowing—wallowing in the trough was the expression wasn't it ?—wallowing about with four dead motors. No wonder they made you tie yourself up in a life jacket.

They were turning again, this time into wind. Henry could see

the break of waves a few hundred feet below coming gradually around to meet them, now facing them exactly, and a headland across the bows. He must be trying to put her down in sheltered water.

The steward came through again, glanced at everyone, but the seat belts and life jackets were all done up tight, no mistake about that. He went aft to the other cabin.

Henry braced his feet against the back of the seat in front. We'll plough into one of those with a hell of a splash, he said to himself, seeing the big combers coming on one after the other. We're bound to crack up. They were nearer now, they were coming quickly, very quickly, faster and faster but still not touching, holding off; she was skimming for ever.

Then he heard the first light clip of water on the hull. Here now, this was it. Hold tight. But more delay till a smack this time, smack the baby's bottom, and a hard smack, and a very hard smack, and a walloping thump, belt biting into your stomach. From that in a few seconds through blustering roaring water to a dead stop and a new motion, pitching and sea-sawing deeply, sluggishly, on the sea.

That was a mercy to thank the clever pilot for, to thank God for; the land was no distance away, a quarter of a mile perhaps if you could only reach it. If you could . . . But how could you? A new nasty word popped into Henry's mind. *Sharks*. Not a nice word, not nice at all. He was also beginning to feel sick, which was hardly to be wondered at in a cabin suddenly stifling hot, water surging a dirty green over his window, the boat tossing about drunkenly, pounding her wing floats under.

But an unexpected and heaven-sent thing happened then. First one motor caught and then a second on the other wing. The big flying-boat, the small boat, steadied herself, rose a little on the step; the strip of sandy shore out there began to slide back slowly. Was it? Yes, it really was, quicker now, and the waves were smaller under the headland.

In a few minutes they lay at anchor in calm water. The Captain himself—not a special looking man, just the kind of man you meet on the 8-42; but a very special man in their eyes now despite his average appearance—came back.

"I'm afraid we shall be an hour or two," he said laconically. "The engineer patched it up just as we landed, but he'll have to check all the circuits. Would you like to go ashore? Probably cooler there." He saw the empty shock-look on their faces. That was just how he felt now himself, but he had to put on an act, being in charge.

With one accord they said, yes, they would like to go ashore. So in a few minutes Henry followed the Marriott lady over the side of the dinghy into warm water and waded to the beach. It was stiflingly hot there in the sun at two o'clock in the afternoon, and the wind was bad too, a smothering blanket of wind which made you catch your breath.

Henry always felt small and dejected in strange circumstances

however undramatic those circumstances might be. Now, apart from a certain agreeable sensation of relief, he felt very small indeed. This'll teach you to have adventurous ideas at your age, he said to himself. He often said things to himself, as is the habit of frustrated people.

" We'd better go over there and sit in the shade," said S/Comdr. Marriott. She seemed to have taken him into her care. So he tagged along with her till they found an overhanging rock which was hot itself but gave protection from the fierce sun. " Watch out for scorpions," she said, searching the sand.

Henry had never seen a live scorpion, but he knew the signs of the Zodiac. He looked carefully for the objectionable creatures. There were none ; and now he was sitting, not unmindful of Scorpio, the lobster claws, the wicked tail.

" This your first trip to the East ? "

He had resented her off-hand catechizing before, but he did not mind it now. In fact he felt quite friendly towards her in the relief of a danger past.

" My first trip," he said. " Have you been this way ? "

" Three years in the services during the war. That was in India. Had a good time. Lipton, you said your name was ? "

" Yes, Henry Lipton."

" Mine's Marriott," she told him again.

" I saw it on your bag. What does S oblique C-O-M-D-R- stand for ? "

" Senior Commander, A.T.S.—Women's branch of the army. I was in it for the duration. Why are you going to India ? "

" I'm going tiger-shooting."

She turned right round to look at him. " Are you now ? Well, well ! Wouldn't have thought it."

Just then the dinghy left the side of the flying boat.

" Come on, Lipton," said this remarkable female, springing lithely to her feet. " Here's the Captain coming ashore. Let's go and find out the gen."

" WHAT'S the form, Captain ? "

" It's a bit of a bore," he said. " The Engineer found the cause of the short, but we can't isolate that circuit, which means a certain amount of rewiring. Say three and a half hours to finish the job ; then half an hour for a test flight. By that time it'll be dark. So I signalled that we'd spend the night and go on early tomorrow."

What the Captain did not say was that unless and until the sea abated considerably he would not be able to go on at all. He kept that particular anxiety to himself, not that it was a very serious anxiety, since the wind usually fell at night ; and if it did not, he could have food and water flown to them at a few hours' notice. But it was inconvenient, and his wife was in Cairo and they had entered for the mixed foursomes at Gezira on Saturday.

" What are the food and water stakes ? " Antonia Marriott's expressions were strange to Henry, but the Captain understood.

" We can spare three pints of water per head until morning. There isn't much food except hard tack. Plenty of that."

" Then we'd better get organized. Have you got any fish-hooks ? "

" Yes, there are a few in the emergency kit." The Captain looked at her with admiration. Being a man long used to action, and a somewhat lazy man, he was only too pleased to have the passengers organized into activity and the evening meal arranged by someone else, particularly by a handsome young woman like this.

" Who's a fisherman ? "

" I am," said Huddersfield. " I'm a dumn good fisherman." With his wet face and shirt clinging pinkly to his pudgy body, he looked less like a fisherman than you could imagine, but he was keen to have the job. Two others also said they would like to fish.

" All right," she said. " You three fish. I suggest you try off that point. We can't cook without fuel, so we must have a driftwood party. Who'll hunt for wood ? "

The others all said they would hunt for wood, of which there was none visible.

" Lipton and I will shoot meat for the pot."

" Do we need fish *and* meat ? " put in the Captain. He found her bewitching, so he really only said it to hear what her reply would be. She did not disappoint him.

" Two strings to our bow," she said briefly. " I'll get my small rifle." She and Huddersfield paddled out in the dinghy to fetch their respective equipment, and the rest of the passengers wandered off leaving the Captain and Henry together at the water's edge.

Antonia Marriott was back in a very short time. She had changed into khaki shirt and shorts. The rifle was slung over one shoulder, and she wore a leather belt round her waist with a hunting knife and a pouch of spare ammunition ; also a pair of field glasses hanging from her neck.

" Diana ! " said the Captain audibly as she stepped ashore. He was beginning to think that the mixed foursomes at Gezira were not so important after all.

She ignored him. " Come on, Lipton. Let's get cracking." So they set off across the beach and up over soft sand dunes, burning hot underfoot, until they could see inland.

It was a brown plain, the same near-white brown which they had flown over all morning. She searched the ground with her glasses. " Nothing in sight. We'd better look from there." She pointed to a small bump in the plain ahead ; then took out a pocket compass, checked the bearing, and set off. The ground was harder now, baked earth, not sand.

" What are we hunting ? " said Henry. He was getting thirsty, and he was already a little resentful at being taken along without explanation like a dog out for a walk. He took off his topi, and that was cooler for a minute till his forehead became dry. She wore no hat.

" There ought to be gazelle. Just the right country for them."

He could not imagine it being the right country for any living creature. However, he said nothing and plodded along behind her.

"Have you done much shikar?"

"I've never done any." With his parched throat, and the dust blinding him, and memories of brave movie heroes trudging off to their death in a Sahara desert exactly like this, Henry was in no mood for dissimulation.

"Here we are." She propped the rifle with care against an earthy wall, and inched herself up to the crest of the bump. Henry sat down to rest. She hissed at him almost immediately. "Come up carefully," she whispered. He crawled up carefully and took the glasses.

"Look over beside that nullah. Range about four hundred."

He saw the gazelle at once. There were four of them, delicate little creatures, brown with pale bellies. They were browsing unconcernedly. It was incredible that they could find anything to eat in that country. No other living thing was in sight; nothing was in sight except the four small animals and an endless broken desert, or not quite endless for it shimmered into mirage at the horizon.

They slid back again.

She licked a long finger and held it up. "Testing for wind. It's blowing from the right. How do we stalk them?"

In theory Henry knew all about stalking into wind, but he was confused now, in no condition for a stalking lesson, so he just dithered and said nothing.

"We'll go up that nullah on the left. It's an easy stalk." She had the hunter's gleam in her eye, and her nostrils were dilated.

Henry was unable to share this urge to kill. He pitied the innocent creatures so soon to be dead, for he knew that one or all were surely doomed. It was impossible to imagine that Antonia Marriott would fail in her purpose. No, he was sorry for the gazelles.

"You aren't going to shoot them all, are you?"

She laughed. "No, only one. Follow me and do exactly what I do."

So he followed her, doing exactly what she did. When she paused, he paused; when she hurried, he hurried; when she bent down so that the shorts clung tightly round her graceful shape, Henry bent down and his trousers also clung tightly round his shape, not graceful. Fortunately no actual crawling was necessary.

She looked round at him now and then as they stalked up the nullah. He felt a vague impulse to sit down in rebellion or to shout warnings to the unfortunate gazelles. But he did neither of these things. On the contrary, he was so cowed by Miss Marriott, so much the victim of her dominant personality, that he did his very best to carry out her instructions. Finally she unslung the rifle, slipped off the muzzle cover, turned over the safety catch, motioned Henry to wait, and crawled up the steep side of the nullah.

He was too tired now even to look for scorpions. He slumped down to rest, breathing in husky gasps. Then the shot rang out.

"Got him!" she shouted gleefully. So Henry clambered to his feet once more and walked the hundred and fifty yards with her to

where the gazelle lay dead, a bullet in its heart. The lustre of life was still in eyes and coat, still in black muzzle as the muscles twitched and slackened, became finally inert.

" It's rather sweet," she said unexpectedly.

" I don't see the point of killing a little thing like that," said Henry, irritated by her for lusting to kill, then making such a remark after she had killed it. Now she'll talk about meat for the pot, he thought. Now she'll crush me flat.

But she did not. " We'd better be getting back. You take the rifle ; I'll carry this."

" I'll carry it." Henry did not want to carry the gazelle, did not know how to carry it, but a reluctant pride said to him : You have to be more manly than this woman. So without more ado he grasped forelegs and hindlegs and swung the small body up so that it lay much like a warm fox-fur round his neck. He waited till she had taken the reversed compass bearing ; then they set off westwards across the empty desert which lay all around them hostile and arid, although a little less hot now, and no sign at all of the sea a mile away. She knows her stuff all right, Henry thought. Then he had no thoughts except about the fifty pound burden bearing more heavily on his shoulders every minute, and water, a whole Potomacful of water to assuage his thirst.

" Let me carry it for a bit."

He shook his head, too dry to speak. His male ego was at stake ; he blundered on until at last she said : " There we are ! " and the sea lay ahead.

" I'll clean it now." Henry let the gazelle slip to the ground. She drew her knife from its sheath, made a long deft cut, and in a moment the intestines lay looped on the ground, and Miss Marriott's right arm was bloody to the elbow. He watched with shuddering fascination as she severed the wind-pipe. " That's that," she said, rubbing her arm with sand. Soon the blood was gone ; soon by all outward and visible signs she might never have been gory. But a quotation came sharply to Henry. *Out, damned spot,* and the blood was there again for him to see. Nor did the vision fade when she surprised him by taking a compact from her pocket. " Must fix my face up."

After she had fixed her face they each took a pair of legs and carried the carcase between them through sand dunes down to the beach where they at once were the focus of admiring attention.

" Good work," said the Captain. " We heard the shot. Did you have to go far ? "

" About a mile. Lipton carried it all the way back. He did splendidly." She gave Henry a friendly pat on the shoulder.

He felt most grateful. The whole affair had been exhausting, the killing had been distasteful to him, but Henry knew suddenly that his mettle had been tested and not found wanting. He was in desperate need of liquid. " Wanna drink," was all he could croak.

The other passengers had miraculously discovered a single baulk of timber along the shore ; and Huddersfield and his companions

had caught a few fish—pronounced edible by someone who knew the waters of the Persian Gulf.

Now the merciless sun softened in the west, and sank and died with unexpected beauty and compassion. Now the sound of axes rang out, and driftwood spluttered, burning blue. Now gazelle steaks sizzled and were succulent. Now the stranded Europeans sat with plates and knives and cups of coffee on a desert shore. Now the riding lights of the flying boat rose and fell gently. Now it was hot, but less hot. Now suddenly it was night.

Soon Henry lay on his back, head pillowed on his jacket. He lay a little apart from the others, for he wanted to be alone. He wanted to think about this extraordinary day which had begun uneasily, continued in boredom, changed of a sudden into danger, from that as abruptly into thirsty stalking with a new kind of woman, and then finally into a moonlight picnic. "I had more adventures today than in all the rest of my life," he muttered aloud. After that he did not think, but listened to waves breaking on the shore, watched moon and stars in the great night sky, and fell contentedly to sleep.

THE noise of an engine woke him before dawn; then another, the third, the fourth, and they were all rumbling and popping out there on the water. There was no wind at this moment, at four-fifty a.m. A flame burned at the fire, lighting the chiselled features of Miss Marriott who knelt beside it.

He lay still, hoping not to attract her attention, since he was unwilling to be detailed off to duty or to be led away at this hour of the morning on some expedition. But she must have known he was awake, for presently she came over.

"Morning. Here's a brew for you," she said, handing him a mug and going back to the fire. It was coffee laced with brandy. He sipped it gratefully.

She's my pal, he thought. She's my good friend and true although I'll never see her again after today. She's my companion of the chase, my hunting mentor, my elder brother, and I don't know why she took me under her wing. Equally I cannot fathom why that Captain courted her so assiduously last evening. She's a bloodthirsty buddy, not a baby.

Strong drink in the early morning, hunting trips with masterful ladies, desert nights—these were new things to Henry, yet already as familiar as if he had been doing them all his life. But much stranger, much more indicative of his emancipation was the racy terminology of thought which he now found himself using.

After his night in the open air and his laced coffee he was feeling fine. He walked some way along the beach, took off shirt and trousers, and splashed about in shallow water. He did not feel like forty years old; he felt like a million dollars.

The boat taxied out for her test flight. She took off with shattering noise in the dawn. But strangely enough the effect was not discordant. It was a harmony of sound and silence, of movement and

stillness, of night and day. She rose darkly with noise; she came down pinkly, quietly, and so back to her anchorage.

The engines stopped. The small anchor rattled out. The Captain's window opened, and he bellowed with cupped hands: "All aboard!"

And Henry thought: This is romance at last. This is the life. Indeed he was right, for romance is a personal thing. It is the unexpected. It is a staid airline captain summoning his passengers, his partners now after a night on a lonely shore.

The dinghy was lowered. Soon Henry and Miss Marriott sat with belts fixed on either side of the gangway. The boat turned into wind—it was a light breeze in the early morning—motors puttered for those last few moments of checking up. Henry glanced over at the beach.

Here it was. Here was the surge, heavy-laden, slow, water cascading on the windows, sheets of water solid, then up, then faster, held back against your seat, roaring, all wild without, all orderly within the cabin, all rising, all lighter, all smacking, all slipping back, all water fading, a last skitter, engines thundering, and there was the sea below.

They flew on through another morning—over the Persian Gulf, over a narrow strip of hills, over the Gulf of Oman, down to refuel, and so onwards till the hills of Baluchistan lay to the left, a little darker but as bare as all the other desert places.

India was two hours away when Antonia Marriott said: "Mind if I come and sit with you for a bit?"

He moved the magazines from the spare seat beside him; then he waited for her to speak. She was a good guy in her own way, perhaps not so arrogant as he had thought at first; perhaps only indifferent to what people thought about her.

"You said you were going tiger-shooting. Why?"

"I'm going because I want to. I guess I've always wanted to."

"Hmmm. Made your plans?"

"No."

"Gotta rifle?"

"Yes. Gotta four-seventy double barrel. My father's." Her clipped mode of speech was infectious.

"That's big enough to kill anything. And you've never shot in your life?"

"No."

"Well, I must say you show initiative." Silence. "You've got guts, Lipton."

Here she was firing questions at him in that rude way. But she said he had guts. Nobody ever said that before.

"They'll fleece you in India. They'll fleece you like a fat woolly sheep."

Henry stirred uncomfortably.

"You're rich, I suppose?"

"Some," said Henry. Yes, he was rich. He was also resentful, not used to such blunt questions about personal matters.

"They'll know that the first minute—every bearer, every shikari, every coolie. They'll not only fleece you, they'll milk you dry. No reflection on them. They're poor people, most of them hungry; it's the custom. Then you'll hate them."

There was another pause while she frowned and arched her nostrils and bit her lip. She's nervous, he realized suddenly.

"Look, Lipton! I'm going tiger shooting myself. Got my jungle block. Got my licences. Got everything. I know the ropes backwards. Gotta suggestion to make!"

"Well?" he said, feeling that odd sensation you sometimes have that you're not sitting where you are sitting. The plane rode on serenely towards India.

She drew a deep breath and said long-hand: "I suggest we team up together on a fifty-fifty basis. You're a decent chap, Lipton. You're a new kind of American to me. I don't like the idea of you going off alone and being mauled by the first tiger you meet. Also I could teach you all about it."

Another personal, but this time rather dubious, compliment. That was an added complication in Henry's already confused mind. What should he do? What should he say? How could he refuse? If he was anybody but himself he could easily refuse—say no, politely; say I'm very sorry but I misled you a minute ago. I do have my plans made.

But was it such a bad idea? Wouldn't it save him making countless preparations in a strange country? Wouldn't it be a help? He could always leave her if she turned out to be insufferable like he had thought at first. First impressions are right, you know. No, they're not.

Henry Lipton took the line of least resistance. "O.K.," he said weakly. "Let's do that."

"Good man," she said.

They sat in silence, these oddly-assorted partners; and one at least was full of misgivings. He thought of the regimented days that lay ahead; of the jungle paths where he would follow, always follow; of killing a tiger by command. *Fire, Lipton*, she would hiss; so he would fire, and there would be no glory of achievement, no true realizing of a dream.

It was a dreadful prospect; a dreadful result of his weakness. He groaned aloud; then spoke quickly, haphazardly, to cover it: "Why are you going tiger-shooting?"

"Always been keen on it. My hobby, you might say."

HENRY followed her along the jungle path. She wore sneakers, and he wore sneakers, and the shikari came third in bare feet; so they were a silent procession.

For three mornings now they had been up before first light, had gone out from the forest rest house and down the village street where dung smoke hung acridly in the dawn stillness, and so along jungle tracks to visit six young water-buffaloes tied up in likely places. So far these offerings at the tiger-altar had come through unscathed.

Dull creatures fortunately, they would be browsing on the hay which had been left as a sop to their anxiety ; or they would be lying down, chewing the cud. Only once had a buffalo leaned stiff-legged against its rope in slow-witted bovine terror ; and fresh pug-marks in a circle around it had shown the reason.

There was a big tiger in the block, there was still one water-hole to keep him there at the driest season of the year ; so now it was a matter of time and, as always, a matter of luck.

This morning they had already visited three tie-ups, had stalked the last fifty yards with particular care in case this should be the one, the unlucky buffalo with young coat still brown. But each time had been anti-climax ; each time there had been relief mixed secretly with Henry's disappointment. I'm glad it wasn't that one, he thought, looking at the phlegmatic animal, not that he could tell one from the other, for all six were as like as six peas.

Now they were approaching the fourth. The path ran between trees to the edge of a nullah. On the far side, fifty yards to the left, under the big sal tree, that was where the buffalo was tied. In a moment now Tony Marriott would relax her tension and would stride on across white stones uncomfortable under thinly-shod feet to inspect the sand round the tie-up. But she did not move on. She stood for another minute before she beckoned to them.

The buffalo was not there. A broken end of rope dangling from the tree-trunk showed what had happened to it. They went over in silence to the tree. It was the same big tiger. He had walked along the sandy edge of the nullah, had lain down a short distance from the buffalo ; then had killed with no struggle and had dragged his meat up the bank and into the jungle.

They tiptoed back the way they had come, over the stones again, over the sand not yet hot, into trees where the sun had just begun to touch high branches.

The shikari was an ancient fellow. Henry listened to him whisper excitedly and sibilantly, his voice breaking out high. He had taken a piece of stick and was drawing a rough oblong on the ground. " What's he saying ? "

" Says it's sure to be lying up beyond the nullah. Says we can't follow it in because of the dead leaves in that sal forest. He's right enough ; we'd make a hell of a racket. Says he'll cut through to the next nullah and check for pug-marks, but he's almost sure the tiger won't have crossed. Wants us to wait here."

Bhagwan, the shikari, summoned two helpers who were lurking in the background ; then he set off with his scurrying bent-kneed gait.

" What happens if the tiger is still in that bit of jungle ? "

" We'll have a beat," said Tony. *Call me Marriott,* she had said the first day they arrived. But Henry had coughed uncomfortably, for he did not much fancy the idea of calling women by surnames only, even in the jungle. *Or Tony, if you want.* So he called her Tony. She leaned back against a tree now, bareheaded as usual with her tawny mop of hair, not red exactly, not plain brown. She sat still, absolutely still except for the rise and fall of her fine chest. This

faculty for being motionless, for sitting relaxed with never a need to stir, so that she was as much a part of the jungle as the trees were a part of it, or the tigers or the sambhar deer, was another extraordinary thing about her. Henry himself was restless. He modelled himself on her in all jungle matters, but this was a thing he found very difficult. Sooner or later a large black ant would scurry lightly, busily up his stocking, on to his bare knee, tickle his thigh; and smack, he could not stand it. Such things never seemed to happen to her.

They waited for a long time now in silence, perhaps for half an hour till the shikari came back.

"*T'hik hai, sahib*," he said. Even if you did not know the language, you could tell from his beaming face that all was well. "Two men are watching. Now we must go quickly."

They did go quickly. Tony led the way home at a great pace, swinging lithely and effortlessly between the tall trees, with the sun warming up now already at seven-thirty. It was the middle of April, a time of year in northern India when the days are hot, bearing promise of much more heat to come; but the nights are still moderately cool on the verandah or out in the garden.

This may be the day, Henry was thinking. With any luck this *is* the day. His pulse beat faster in anticipation of the moment which he had dreamed about for so long, that hot moment when at last he would meet his tiger; but he worried also lest he make some shameful mistake and incur Tony's displeasure.

These anxieties did not leave him at breakfast, and he remained dour and silent while Miss Marriott talked with unaccustomed animation. She had a gleam in her eye.

And so back to the jungle. The beaters, about a hundred of them, squatted in a clearing. They were all kinds and shapes of Hindu villager, but each with his long lathi-stick, each with his dhoti gathered round thin shanks of legs, each with puggaree or skull cap covering the one long top-knot of hair at the crown of his head. They chattered incessantly and quietly in a low hum, for Bhagwan, the shikari, was a stern taskmaster, and whenever anyone's voice went into the cracked crescendo of animation, Bhagwan would stop what he was doing and rush fiercely to chide the offender. This was Bhagwan's day.

Tony spoke fluent Hindustani. Now she asked Bhagwan a few questions, gave him clipped orders; and all was suddenly silent except for her voice and his voice replying; and the beaters looked open-mouthed at this strange woman from far away, *a woman*, yet knowing the things of the jungle, speaking with the calm voice of authority.

Henry stood in the background watching it all, smelling the smell of warm humanity, knowing that it was happening; yet feeling as he had felt in the plane the other day, that he was not here but somewhere else. He had seized a quiet moment after breakfast to glance at Durnford's *Precepts for the Tiger Beat: Keep absolutely quiet. Do not fire too soon*, and others. He said them over to himself again now,

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was saying them when Bhagwan sent the beaters trooping off, and Tony Marriott said in quite a kindly way: "Come on, Lipton. You're dreaming. It's time to go."

They turned left up the wide water-course. It wound its way towards the foothills a mile to the north. It was hard to visualize this heat-reflecting nullah—drier now than the jungle itself which drooped in dry heat—as a turbulent river in the time of the monsoon. It was hard to imagine that. Indeed it was hard to imagine that rain would ever come to this country, would turn it overnight from a brown deadness into a vivid and excessive growth.

Bhagwan led the way across the nullah and into the jungle. "This is your machan," breathed Tony looking up the tree. "Don't fire at anything except tiger. Keep still. Let him get close. Whatever you do, don't turn him back into the beat. I'll be on the left."

Henry climbed up the make-shift rope ladder and sat on his machan. It was a small wooden framework criss-crossed with string, quite comfortable. He loaded five-inch shells into the big rifle, laid it across his knees and settled down to wait.

He watched Tony climb to her machan on the left, and Bhagwan go on out that side. The strip of jungle was only about seventy yards wide at this place, nullahs to left and right. Ahead of him it was fairly open for a short distance. Beyond that were thorn bushes and long grass, wilting now; beyond that again were tall trees.

NOTHING happened for a long time. There was no sound and no movement. No breeze stirred the dusty leaves; nothing happened to tell you that there was life in this place, that a tiger, a very big tiger, was sleeping through the heat of the day. He may not be here at all, Henry thought. He may have sneaked along, no not sneaked, prowled along right under where we are now and be miles away.

Now the sticks began to tap in the distance; the rattling tap of a hundred sticks, like drums rolling, but without resonance. The beat was on. Henry slipped forward the safety catch, kept his right forefinger carefully away from the triggers. There were so many things to think about, so many mistakes you could easily make. All you had to do, for instance, was to press one of those triggers, and the big rifle would go off like a cannon, and that would be the end of one tiger beat. It was so easy to spoil everything that for a moment he had a perverse impulse to press a trigger, to do the one thing on earth that he wanted not to do.

The tapping went on, swelling imperceptibly in volume, the remorseless tapping designed to wake the tiger from his sleep and make him think: That irritating noise, not dangerously near, but unfamiliar. I will move away from it in my own time.

Now there was movement in the jungle. First a peacock walked slow and stately, trailing his iridescent feathers, the beautiful vain peacock. He went unsuspecting past Henry's tree. Then it was a chital, a small spotted deer moving lightly, tentatively, and through like a shadow dappled with the sunlight. Then a party of brown birds chattering together. These were the jungle babblers, the seven

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sisters, always in a fuss. They came by hops and short anxious flights. These came and others while the tapping drew nearer, and a vulture was circling high above.

Here I am now, Henry thought, doing what Caroline and Horace and Mrs. Robbie and all the others never thought I could do. I wish they could see me, sitting so silent so alert in my tree, waiting with Father's rifle across my knees. I am the hunter; I am the son of the pioneer Liptons; I am a true son of the frontier. I am the spirit which made America. I am the American dream.

That was splendid while it lasted, while he felt his mastery watching the light-footed jungle beasts pass beneath, and the gay birds and sombre birds come through the trees. But the traffic stopped, and there was no movement anywhere for a long time except for the vulture circling in a dull blue sky; and Henry was alone again with that tapping, aware of his aloneness and his nervous tension and of all the dreadful mistakes he could make. I am a balloon about to be pricked. I am the expectant father of all boobs. These thoughts were harder, clearer than the glory of a few minutes before.

NOW after the monotonous tapping, after and with it, there was a sudden heart-stopping volley of shouting from the line of beaters, high Indian shouts, and a new different tapping of sticks, this time individual and distinct.

This was a noise Henry had waited for. It came from the flank stops on his side of the nullah, from the other men who waited in trees, whose job was to prevent the tiger from making a break across the nullah. They had seen tiger.

He felt the safety catch again for the fiftieth time. Yes, it was forward. And he looked into the jungle splashed with sunlight, dark with shadow. Surely he must be coming. Why wasn't he coming? The tapping was too loud now to be certain if that had been a new different noise or had been a sound imagined in his head only.

His heart pounded, thump, thump, thump, heavy like a hammer, like the way you read about and never thought could really happen; he saw the tiger. It was directly in front of his machan, perhaps thirty yards away; it stood in shadow, only the head and shoulders, the front part of the body showing. Henry knew that all his dreams had led to this moment, that all the fancies of his sheltered life had been mere daubs compared with the reality. For this was a noble tiger, a burly tiger, the master of the jungle, tawny red and black with forelegs as thick as young oaks. The head was held low, turning slowly from side to side.

It was a tiger among tigers. It looked as the Manassa Mauler must have looked in his hey-day—heavy-shouldered in arrogant power, a girded supple killer, like ten Dempseys with the spirit of a Dempsey.

Henry was motionless; the tiger took two rippling steps forward, and now the whole length of him was in the open. Henry was motionless, with the sweat tasting salt in his mouth. He was entirely motionless until something bit him or stung him on the back of the neck.

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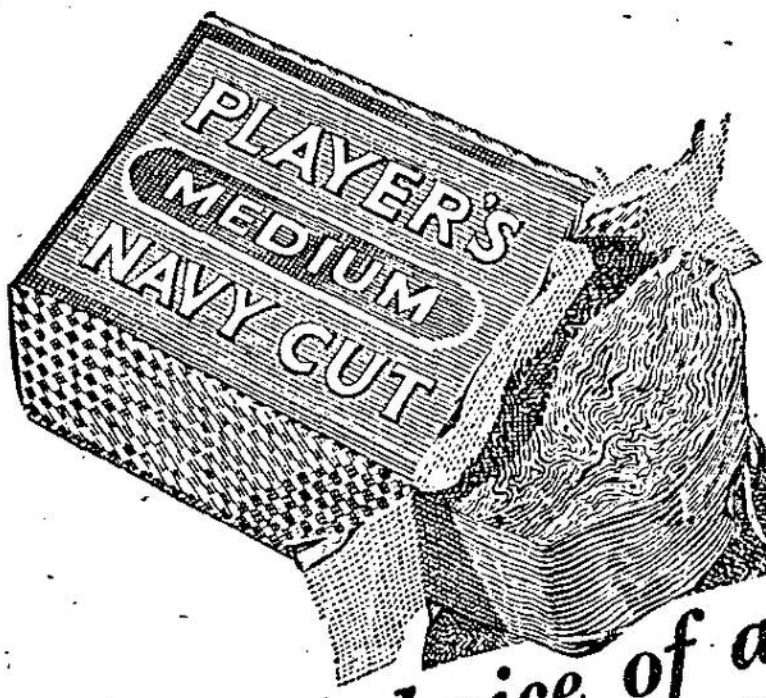

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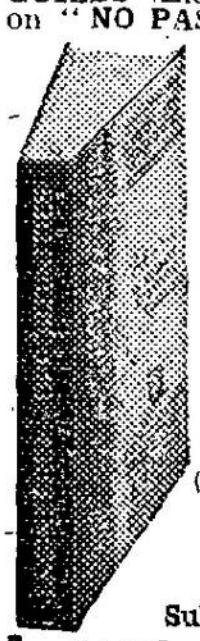

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It was a quick cold dagger of pain in the heat, and this Henry Lipton, this great hunter in embryo, son of a great hunter, but alas not yet master of small sharp pains—Henry twisted his head involuntarily from right to left and back again. Only once, but it was enough. He saw the eyes centre on him, and the long body turn lightning fast. No more tiger.

The things which he said to himself during the next few minutes would have startled a bum on any water-front of the world's harbours. He hurled internal invective, embellished it, polished it, drove it home in disgust. He had done the unforgivable—had turned the tiger back into the beat. He had failed more completely than if he had never left Washington ; and the bitter gist of all he said to himself was that Henry Lipton could not take it.

He was right to say that ; but it was not true, for only through failure is a man's iron tempered. That is, if he has iron. Henry Lipton had iron, as we shall see.

Now the beaters were close. Now he could see glimpses of white clothing in the jungle ahead. With his voice to help him, the Indian peasant is a brave man ; these beaters knew they were nearly on top of the tiger, so they shouted for courage, but did not falter.

The chance of a slow deliberate shot was gone. The tiger would gallop forward or sideways or back, but he would not walk in that bedlam. If he went back, then Henry's sore neck would be the cause of a mauling or a killing, and that would not only be a reproach for failure, but a guilt always with him.

He came forward. He burst at a full hurtling gallop from cover on the left. Thank God for that. Now she would fire. She would fire now just in front, but the tiger had passed her and still no shot. Then it did thunder and echo in the jungle ; all the men's voices were silent. But it was not a silence, for the heavy body tore on through cover behind, and the noise dwindled. Then there was real silence for a moment till Tony's voice.

She said aloud in a matter of fact way what Henry had said under his breath. She said it quietly and fluently, not sparing herself, and the gist of the statement was that she had wounded the tiger. She had a magnificent flow of language.

The beaters arrived now, and the tireless Bhagwan. Henry got down from his tree and went over to her.

" I guess it was all my fault," he said miserably and honestly. " The tiger saw me move."

She looked at him for a while without speaking. She was a little paler than usual ; the sweat trickled down her face and round the jaw in small rivulets to the hollow at the base of her throat. It suited her, as a matter of fact. It suited this Tony Marriott who was not a woman as far as Henry was concerned, but a hunter, a huntress. He expected now that she would do the right thing and curse the lights out of him.

" You'll learn in time," was all she said, dismissing him, turning to Bhagwan.

She and the shikari went a short distance the way the tiger had gone.

" It was here," she said. " Yes, here is blood. He stumbled and went on."

Then she sent the beaters back into the jungle, telling them to be quiet. " We'll have to wait half an hour for him to stiffen." She sat down against a tree and was as motionless as ever.

" I certainly am sorry."

" Here, let me look at your neck. Lump as big as a pigeon's egg. I don't wonder you moved. What was it? An ant or a hornet or what ? "

" I don't know."

It was the first time he had thought of his neck. Now he felt the lump. It still smarted, and was very large, which was better in the circumstances than not having a lump at all.

After that they hardly spoke. Henry sat as still as a graven image, not that stillness was necessary at the moment. Let the ants run up his legs ; let them explore him. *Don't move* ! He had learned the first lesson.

The heat was the thing now. It was all round you, inescapable lip-burning heat, yet not so unpleasant. In the distance was one sound—Tonk, tonk, tonk, someone hammering monotonously on metal, but too regular, too never-resting for that, a sleepy noise. " What's that ? "

" It's the Coppersmith. Small bird."

But it was the only sound in the noon stillness, the rest-time of the jungle.

" We can go now," she said at last.

SHE led the way, first across open ground baked by the sun, then into grass. The trail was not difficult to follow, for blood-spatters were frequent, grew more frequent. The tiger had forced its way headlong through obstructions, leaving broken scrub and grass and saplings as well as blood in its passage.

Tony went very slowly, stopped before each thick piece of cover, listened, once took a stone and threw it ahead. This was the only real danger. Any tiger but a man-eater would always make way for man. It would meet a defenceless woman gathering sticks, would look and step aside, not hurriedly but with deliberation, and go away. But a wounded tiger was different. His power was galvanized into hate. He was hurt or he was dying ; he was hurt and dying, and he would kill.

Henry knew this well. He knew what kind of a job they were taking on. He felt it with fear and exhilaration in every taut nerve of his body as he followed close behind Tony Marriott. Old Bhagwan with nothing but a stick came behind. Any moment, any moment now the roaring fury would be at them.

But they were through the grass, into scrub, under sal trees, into grass again, and the blood trail was thicker, the pug-marks closer together. The tiger had walked here. He had lain down and risen and gone on.

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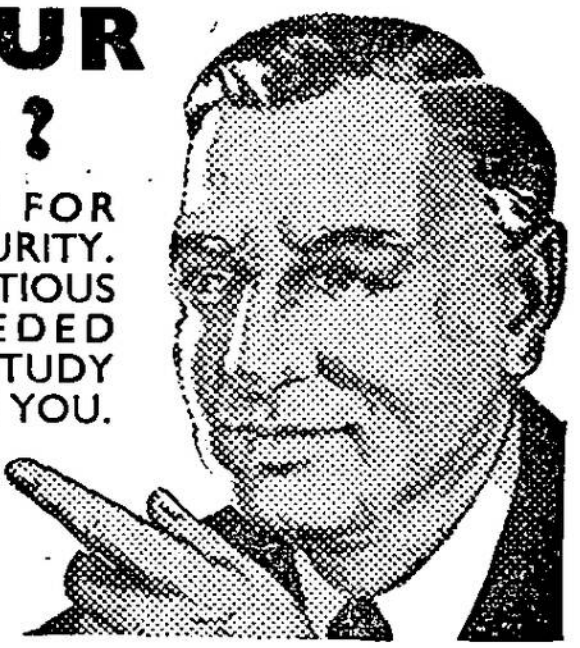

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It was not quiet any more. There was a chattering in the trees ahead.

" Monkeys," breathed Tony. " That's where he is."

So in the end they came near to where the monkeys chattered. Henry's arms and face were bleeding from thorn scratches ; but he hardly noticed that. He moved up beside Tony. The monkeys paid no attention. They swung about the branches and jabbered, all looking down at one place. Even the solemn babies stared.

" I think he's dead," said Tony. " I can see him. I'll give him one for luck." She raised her rifle, took slow aim at the tiger which Henry still could not see, and fired.

The monkeys disappeared in a flurry ; nothing moved.

The tiger lay on its side. It looked as noble in death as in life. Only the quick power had gone.

But it was not Henry's tiger.

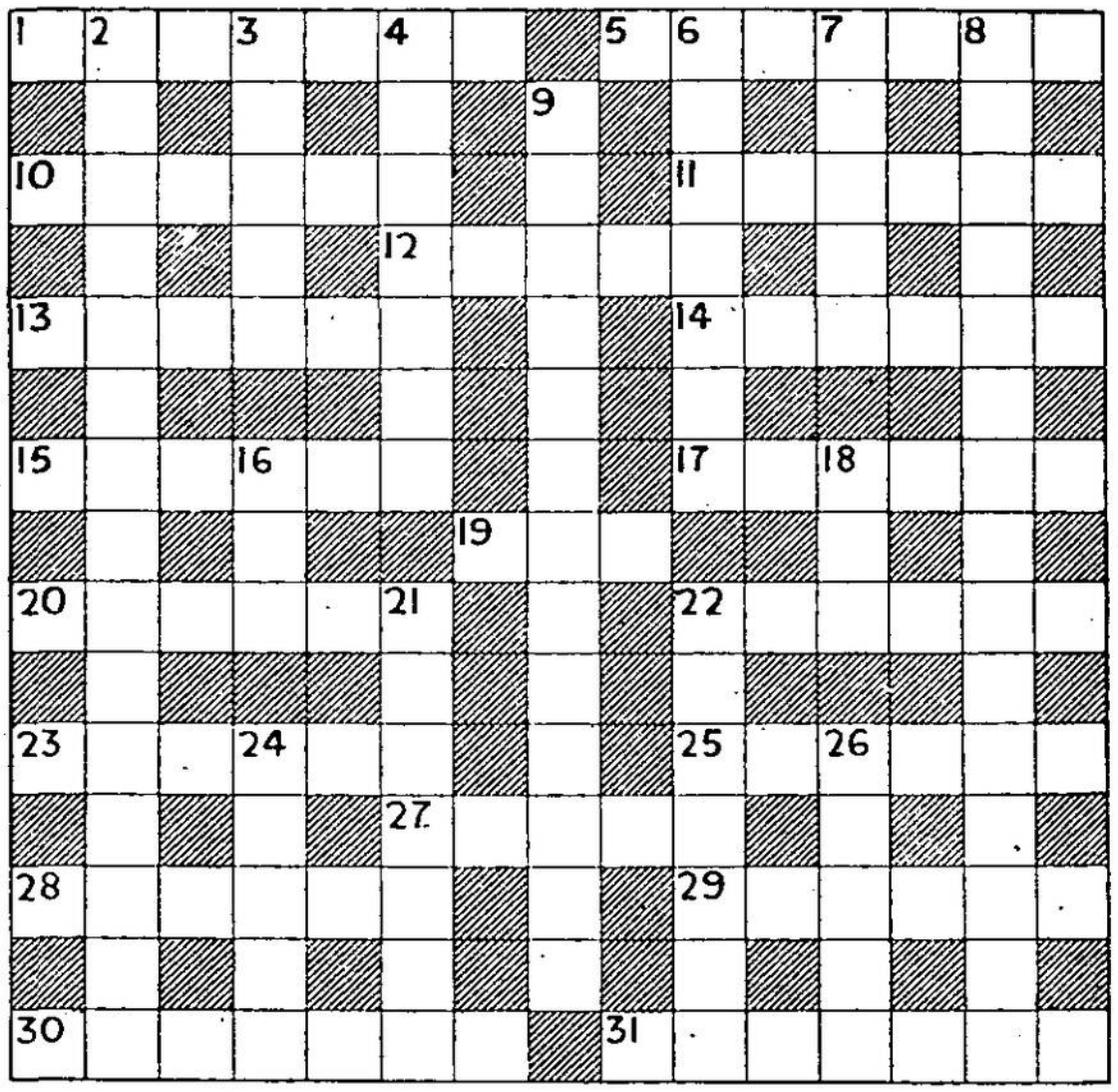
★ ***The second and last part of this story will appear in the next issue of ARGOSY, on sale November 9th. Why not make sure of your copy by placing an order with your newsagent ?***

ANSWERS to RELATIVELY SPEAKING on page 12

1. *Betsey Trotwood, in " David Copperfield ", by Charles Dickens. The old lady sheltered David from the Murdstones.*
2. *The Squire, in " The Canterbury Tales ", by Geoffrey Chaucer. The young man and the Knight, his father, were among the pilgrims travelling to Canterbury.*
3. *John Worthing, in " The Importance Of Being Earnest ", by Oscar Wilde. Worthing discovered that he was really Ernest John Moncrieff, brother of his friend Algernon.*
4. *Fergus Macrae, in " The Brothers ", by L. A. G. Strong. Fergus was dominated by his elder brother, John, who persuaded him to kill the girl, Mary, who had been a temptation to both of them.*
5. *Aunt Jobiska, in " The Pobble Who Has No Toes ", by Edward Lear. The Pobble lost his toes while swimming the Channel, but returned to his aunt to eat " eggs and buttercups fried with fish."*
6. *Lord Randal, in the ballad of that name, author unknown. Lord Randal eventually confessed to his mother that he had been poisoned when dining with his sweetheart.*
7. *Cordelia, in " King Lear ", by William Shakespeare. Lear disinherited her when she refused to flatter him as her sisters did, but when they deserted him she tried to help him.*
8. *James Forsyte, in " The Forsyte Saga ", by John Galsworthy. James was the father of Soames, " The Man Of Property."*

ARGOSY CROSS WORD

Solution on page 55



CLUES

Across

1 The colour of baby's bed after a brief All Fools' Day. (7).

5 There's a little devil at the entrance of this blind alley ! (7).

10 How to start some things and finish others (4, 2).

11 " Only a —— shown and a distant voice in the darkness ; " Longfellow (6).

12 Destroys or remains (5).

13 This tenant has not so much to start with (6).

14 Yet tin, even if broken up, is still this, presumably (6).

15 Shoot bears without ears under canvas, perhaps ? (6).

17 "All this long eve, so balmy and —, Have I been gazing on the western sky," Coleridge (6).

19 Much of this was about nothing ! (3).

20 The right line on savoir faire (6)..

22 The way to describe a sort of round ? (6).

23 He was a gay old one, the Galloping Major ! (6).

25 A monstrous setter of riddles (6).

27 A past deed, to be precise (5).

28 Take a gem from the end of this ruse to expose these layers (6).

29 The first and last in floral surroundings, without exertion (6).

30 A final S would make them singularly feminine ! (7).

31 Pagan who states that he is leaning over (7).

Down

2 He hopes for the reward of success (5, 10).

3 A river in Hindustani (5).

4 It takes little work on the papers to be cruel (7).

6 Wheeled musically round the streets of Dublin with cockles ! (7).

7 French among thieves (5).

8 Useful to motorists needing a 10 across (8, 7).

9 Those dreaming in the present (4, 6, 3).

16 Two more ducks after tea ? That's excessive ! (3).

18 The friend of Toad and Mole (3).

21 Deprive by adding a greeting to a Dorset village (7).

22 The king is taken, and by his own residence, too ! (7).

24 " To see a World in a —of Sand," William Blake (5).

26 This tree—or was it a girl ?—set off in a mist (5).

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Student 357/3015: I have had my story accepted by **BLACKWOODS** who are paying me £25 for it . . . *Student 778/2119:* I thought it might interest you to know that **THE COUNTRYMAN** has accepted a short article of mine on an old country custom . . . *Student 184/315:* As you suggested, I submitted the articles to the **NEW STATESMAN.** One was published on the 17th July. I have also had an article accepted by **MEN ONLY** . . . *Student 181/282:* You may be interested to hear that I had a letter from the Editor of **ARGOSY**; they have offered me Twenty-five Guineas for my story . . . *Student 591/287:* You will be pleased that my article submitted for my Second Lesson was published in the **DAILY MIRROR** and I received Six Guineas for it . . . *Student 120/288:* I have established contact with the Editor of **PUNCH.** The item was accepted for "Charivaria" and is a good start . . . *Student 1179/347:* I succeeded in getting four Big Game stories into **COURIER** and another about "Shrove Tuesday." Another article appeared in the August issue of **BLACKWOODS** . . . *Student 1954/157:* I have just corrected a proof of my story for **WIDE WORLD**; they have since accepted another and I have sent in a third . . . ? *Student 171/162:* I have sold my story to **EVERYWOMAN** for 25 guineas . . . *Student 1106/156:* The B.B.C. accepted the script for the Light Programme—fee 9 guineas—after my first lesson . . . *Student 141/76:* The article which I wrote for the Second Test Paper appeared in the **SUNDAY MAIL.** Thanks for the recommendation. . . . . .